



HISTORY OF LOANGO, KAKONGO AND N'GOYO

By the Abbe PROYART
Paris, 1776

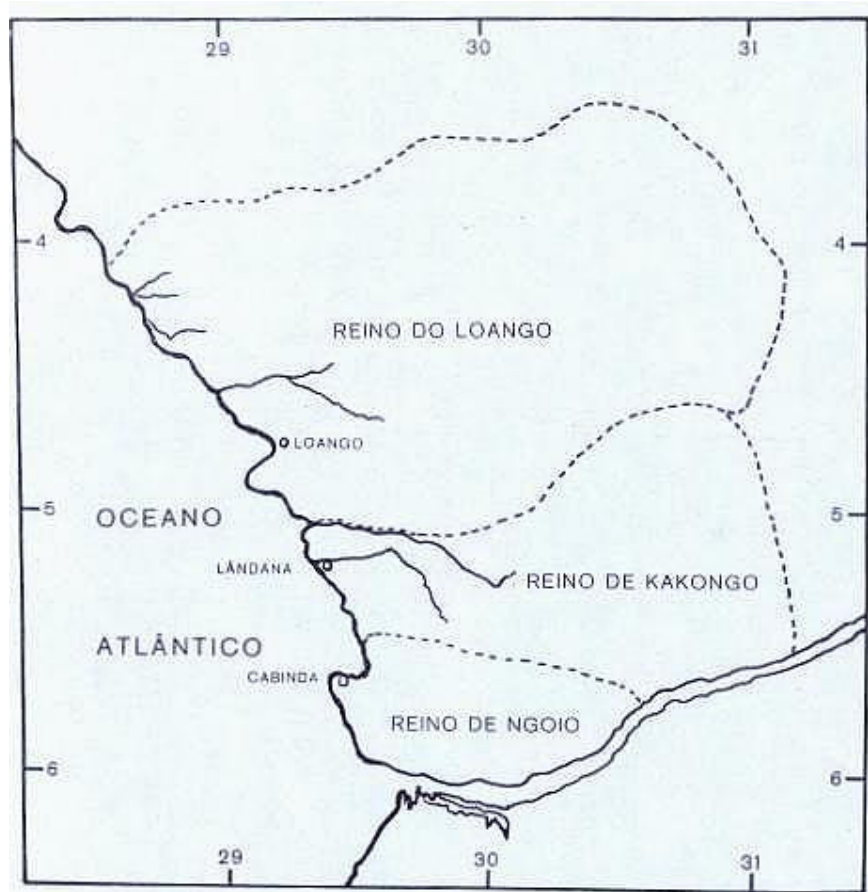
CHAP. I

Design and Division of the Work.

It is surprising enough, that though our vessels habitually frequent the coasts of Loango, Congo, and other Kingdoms in Africa, and our merchants have warehouses there, yet we know absolutely nothing of what passes in the interior of those States, and what the people are who inhabit them. We land among them, give them european merchandise, take in slaves, and return. No one hitherto had penetrated into the country as an observer ; no one at least had remained there a sufficient time to make such observations as might be relied on. We judge of those different people by the inhabitants along the coasts ; and because these persons, frequently imposed upon by europeans, make no scruple of imposing on them in return, we accuse the whole nation of duplicity. They fell men, - we accuse them of inhumanity. Is there, then, so much more humanity in buying them than in selling them? But we do not consider, that the men whom they sell are enemies taken in war, and whom in many cases they might have a right to put to death. We believe that the father sells his son, and the Prince his subjects ; he only who has lived among them can know that it is not even lawful for a master to sell his slave, if he be born in the country, unless he have incurred that penalty by certain crimes specified by law.

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But these are not the only imputations on those people; it is pretended that they are as dissolute in their manners as they are perfidious and inhuman in the affairs of life ; and without hearing their answer to charges so grave, we proceed to arraign them, and assume conjectures and hearsay, vague and partial relations, as the proofs and testimonies.

They are at once accused, tried, and condemned. Persons who have never considered their country but from the top of the observatory, excommunicate them, with map in hand, and pronounce their regions to have fallen from all hope in the religion of the true God. In a sentence so rigorous, founded on so frivolous an accusation, are we to recognize an age in which the dictates of reason and humanity alone are heard ?

These people have vices, - what people is exempt from vice ? But were they even more wicked and more vicious, they would be so much the more entitled to the commiseration, and good offices, of their fellowmen ; and should the missionary despair of making them Christians, men ought still to endeavour to make them men.

This office, so worthy of a true philosopher, was never discharged by any but the Christian philosopher : so true is it, that humanity as well as the other

social virtues, are more the offspring of the Christian religion than of the philosophy of the day. Missionaries were they, who, notwithstanding prejudices so unfavourable to the people of whom we speak, made no hesitation in leaving their country to establish themselves among them, with the intention, if not of making them perfect, at least of improving them. In this history we shall hazard no conjecture we shall make no statement but upon irreproachable testimony. As they knew not the language of the country on their arrival, they had leisure to be observers, before they could become missionaries.

It is not to be expected that we should give a very extensive history of nations who, as yet, have neither acquired the use of letters, nor employ any substitute for them (*); so that the present work will be, not so much a recital of what has passed among them, as a portraiture of their actual condition.

* N.T. -There is substitute for letters in the Kingdom of Kakongo, known as Testos.

In this will be found the geographical situation of the places and the temperature of the climate ; the nature of the soil and its most common productions, vegetable and animal; the character of the people; their virtues and their vices; their alliances, their occupations, their Government and laws, their commerce and their wars, their language and Religion.

CHAP. II

Of the Situation of the Country, and the Temperature of the Air.

The people of whom we treat inhabit the western coast of Africa, from the equinoctial line to the river of Zaira, the mouth of which is about six degrees of latitude South.

This extent of country is divided into several Kingdoms, the most remarkable of which is that of Loango : it commences at the village of Makanda : not at half a degree from the equator, as some travelers have stated, but about 4' 5" South latitude. It has twenty leagues of coast, and terminates at the river of Louango-Louisa, the course of which is 5' 5" of the same latitude. Bouali, the capital, commonly called Loango by the French, is situated about 4' 45". The Kingdom of Kakongo* called by mariners Malimba, and that of N'Goio which they denominate Cabiuda, are to the South of Loango. To the north is found the Kingdom of Iomba, called by mariners and geographers Maiomba, but erroneously so, because Ma-lomba signifies King of Iomba, as Ma-Loango signifies King of Loango. Eastward of Loango are situated the Kingdoms of N'Teka, and another Kingdom of Iomba, which is sometimes confounded with the former. Beyond these Kingdoms are others, unknown to us, and into which no europeans have hitherto penetrated.

* Some geographers call this Kingdom Caconda. Malimbo, is the port of Kakongo, as Cabiuda is of N'Goio. Thus, to call these Kingdoms Malimbo and Cabinda would be the same thing as if the English were to call France the kingdom of Calais, because their vessels touch at the port of that town.

As these different States are situated at no considerable distance from the equinoctial line, the days and nights are pretty nearly equal throughout the year; cold is never

felt there. A naturalist in his cabinet would conclude that the heats must be excessive ; but persons on the spot find them tolerable; and it is impossible to avoid recognizing and admiring that Providence which has anticipated every thing, and which tempers and governs the great whole with wonderful economy. The year in these climates is divided into two seasons of nearly equal duration. The most agreeable and healthy commences in the month, of April, and terminates in October. During this time no rain falls; but in the night there are dews sufficiently abundant to promote the vegetation of plants. The sun, during six months of drought, would heat the earth to excess, were it not that the sky is most generally covered with vapours which intercept its rays and moderate the heats. The dry Season is not the hottest; the summer is reckoned from the month of October to April. The heats in this period are excessive, and would be insupportable, especially to europeans, if there were nothing to mitigate their violence; but they are accompanied with abundant and almost continual rains, which refresh the atmosphere; they are all stormy rains, and few days pass in which thunder is not heard.

These rains form marshes in many places, the exhalations of which corrupt the purity of the air. The natives of the country suffer not the smallest inconvenience from them; but europeans, who are not inured to the climate, ought to remove as far as possible from those marshy tracts. The Kingdom of Kakongo, for this reason, is much more wholesome than that of Loango, because not only the rains are less frequent, but the face of the country is so disposed, as to favour their efflux.

CHAP. III. - Of the Soil, the Waters, and the Forests.

The land is in general light, and rather sandy; more fit for the growth of maize and millet, than for any of the kinds of grain which we cultivate in europe. It is also very fertile; grass grows on it naturally to the height of eight or ten feet; but the Natives know not how to husband and improve such good means: they merely work the surface with a sort of spade or hoe, and this in the rainy Season. This slight culture, however, is sufficient to make the land yield an hundred fold, and often much more, of whatever grain or plants may be bestowed on it. A single grain of maize produces as much as eight hundred, and commonly does not yield fewer than six hundred.

In the country are seen many mountains, and Some very high ones. They contain neither stones nor flints, but consist merely of an accumulation of the same earth which, covers the plains.

Not with standing six months of continual rain, there are vast plains uncultivated and lying waste for want of water. To whatever depth they dig, neither tuffa nor stone is found. It is a stratum of compact argil, which confines the water to the interior of the earth : it is interrupted in certain places, whence it occurs that the waters subsiding gradually undermine the surface, and often excavate large and deep abysses which open instantaneously during the fall of the rains. The inhabitants of the country flee as far as possible from the vicinity of these moving grounds, which are left uncultivated.

The Natives know not the use of wells, nor do they even dig any: it is from the lakes, fountains, and rivers, that they procure the waters they want, and sometimes they have to fetch it from, a great distance.

The streams and rivers which water the country, flow, for the most part, through deep valleys, and are shaded by thick forests, which keep the waters cool and fresh. The river Zaira, which forms the southern boundary of the Kingdoms of N'Goio and Kakongo, flows with equal abundance and rapidity, after the months of drought, and at the end of the rainy season. It has been observed, that such was the case with the little rivers, and even the smallest rivulets; they are never dried up ; nor is there even any perceptible diminution of their waters during the drought. Might it not be said, in explanation. of this phenomenon, that the water of the rains with which the earth is impregnated for six months in the year, discharges itself only by degrees, and during a similar space of time, into the rivers, and the reservoirs which constitute their sources.

Forests of perpetual verdure cover a great extent of the country. All the natives have the right of hunting there, and may cut as much wood as they think proper: but they content themselves with collecting the dead wood, which serves them for firing. Some of the forests are so thick, that the hunters cannot penetrate them, except by gaps and avenues which the wild beasts make, in order to get to the plains to feed during the night, and quench their thirst in the rivers.

CHAP. IV. - Of the Plants, esculent Vegetables, Pulse, and the Fruits of the, Earth.

THE people of these countries, naturally little inclined to labour, attach themselves particularly to the cultivation of those plants which produce most with least trouble; such is the manioc. Its stalk is a species of shrub of tender and juicy wood, which bears leaves much resembling those of the wild vine. A stalk of manioc produces every year ten or twelve roots, fifteen

or twenty inches long and four or five in diameter. The manioc might be raised from seed, but as it shoots from the end, they cut the stalk into small pieces, which they fix in the earth during the rainy season, and which bring forth the same year. In order that the same stalk may produce, for several years in succession, nothing is required but to leave in the ground, at the gathering, some of the smaller roots.

The manioc is the bread of the people, and a constant food which the poor have always in plenty; hence no beggars are to be seen in the country. If, however, the rain were not to fall at the usual season, which, as they assure us, is sometimes the case, there would ensue a most cruel famine; for these people preserve no provisions from year to year, nor have they any means of procuring supplies from abroad.

They prepare the root of the manioc in several ways: after having let it ferment in water for some days, they cut it, lengthwise, into flips, which they parch; otherwise they make a sort of compost of it. For this purpose, the natives have earthen vessels with two bottoms they put the manioc upon the upper one, which is perforated like a cullender; the lower bottom is full of water: they close the vessel hermetically, and place it on the fire: the evaporation of the boiling water cooks the manioc, which would be insipid if it were not done in water.

There is a species of acid manioc, which is never eaten till after the juice has been expressed, and the juice is a poison. It has been observed, that the copper vessels in which they prepared this manioc, did not take the verdegri even for several days after they had been used for this purpose. The leaf of the manioc also is eaten, after the manner of spinach. Besides the manioc, there is nothing which the natives cultivate with more care than the Pinda, which we call Pistachio: it is a species of long nut, which encloses two almonds under a very slender film. This fruit is sown in furrows: it puts forth a stalk which at first resembles that of the trefoil; but afterwards filaments shoot from it, which, after creeping some distance on the surface of the ground, penetrate into it by the summit. The stalk then shoots out a small yellow flower, which does not fructify: it is at the end of the filaments which have entered the earth that the fruit is found in great quantities. It is very good to the taste, but is indigestible; they have it broiled before they eat it. They also bruise it in order to make a paste, which serves as a seasoning for their ragouts. They express from it a tolerably delicate oil.

There is found in this country a potatoe entirely similar to those which are cultivated in our own North American colonies. The Natives call it Bala-n'-poutou, a root of Europe; doubtless because the Portuguese must have brought it to them from America. It is of better quality and more saccharine than our European potatoes. The stalk, cut to bits and stuck in the earth, reproduces the species.

The Ignam is a thick shapeless root covered with knots, which enclose as many germs. In order to reproduce it, they cut it into small pieces which they rub upon the ashes, and leave them exposed to the heat of the sun; they then put them in the earth : each piece produces a long stalk which they support with a prop. The root of the Ignam is more pleasant to the palate than that of the manioc, but the natives neglect the culture of it because it produces little.

In the rainy season they plant four or five sorts of small beans similar to our haricots. There are several species of them, of which they can gather three crops in less than six months. They have also an earth pea, the stalk of which resembles that of our wild strawberry plant; it trails along the ground like that of the Pinda, and it enters by filaments, at the ends of which the peas are found; they are agreeable to the taste, but indigestible in European stomachs.

The melons, pompions, and cucumbers demand scarcely any care. The spinage and sorrel grow in the fields without culture. Near the villages and along the roads is found purslain quite like ours. Dogs'-grafs is not, more uncommon there than with us, and the natives also use its root for making ptisan when they are sick.

Our Palma Christi is very common on the plains. Tobacco seems to be one of the natural productions of the country; the natives cast the seed of it at random into their courtyards and gardens, where it fructifies without tillage. Some persons, in imitation of the Europeans, take the tobacco as snuff, but all of them smoke; and the men and women have their pipes of potter's earth.

Cabbages, radishes, and the greater part of our European table-vegetables accommodate themselves perfectly well to the soil; chicory also grows here as fine as in France.

In many provinces they cultivate maize or Turkey-wheat. It grows so readily that in the space of six or seven months they gather six or seven crops from the same land. As the inhabitants of the country know not the use of mills, they pound the grains of maize in a wooden mortar and reduce it to meal, which they make into a paste and bake it under the cinders. Sometimes they parch their grains much in the same way as we roast our coffee, and eat it without any other preparation.

In the Kingdom of Kakongo there is a species of millet, the stalk of which grows as thick as a man's arm; it bears ears which weigh as much as two and even three pounds. This plant is indigenous ; they find it in the midst of the desert plains, but few people bestow any particular culture upon it.

CHAP. V

Of the Trees and Shrubs.

THE palm-tree, of all fruit-trees, is that which the natives account the most useful: it grows to a height of forty or fifty feet, on a trunk of from fifteen to eighteen inches diameter. It sends out no branches, but merely a tuft of leaves with the spread of a fan at its top. These leaves, before they expand, form a large white lettuce, extremely tender and of a saccharine and vinous taste. The palm tree produces its fruit in bunches, each grain of which is of the size of a nut, and is called the palm-nut ; the skin (or shell) is yellowish. This nut is eatable ; but they generally-boil it in water or roast it on the coal, then they bruise it, and express from it an oil which serves to season their ragouts, or to anoint their bodies. Each nut bears a kernel, which is very hard, and encloses an almond, the taste of which the natives deem excellent.

They also draw from the palm-tree a liquor which the Europeans call palm wine. In order to do this they make a slight incision in that part of the tree where the fruit begins to form a small tumor before it blows ; they slick into the incision a leaf folded in the form of a gutter, to serve as a vehicle for the liquor, which is received in a calabash, attached over night to the palm-tree ; it is commonly found full the next morning. This liquor forms the common beverage of the rich ; it has the taste of our wine when brought fresh out of the winepress ; it is pectoral and refreshing : they say, that it intoxicates when it is taken to excess ; it acidulates in a few days. The natives of the country do not prefer any liquor to the palm-wine except the brandy, which is brought to them from Europe.

The cocoa-tree differs from the palm-tree only by its fruit ; it also produces grapes; but the grains are of the size of a small -melon. This fruit is clothed with a very bard shell, sufficiently solid to admit of beads being cut out of the entire substance. The milky juice which issues in abundance from the opening of the cocoa is a sweet beverage, and at the same time very agreeable and nourishing, while the solid substance cut from its shell constitutes a good and tolerably wholesome food. It appears that the cocoa-tree is not indigenous, and that it was transported from America to Africa by the Europeans, because the cocoa is called banga n' poutou, nut of Europe.

The banana is more common than the cocoa-tree; it is rather a plant than a tree, growing however to the height of twelve or fifteen feet on a trunk of eight or ten inches diameter ; the fruit puts forth from the middle of this trunk in the form of a cluster of grapes, which we call regime. Each cluster bears from a hundred to two hundred bananas, and the banana is about eight or ten inches in length by about one inch in diameter; so that a good cluster is a man's burthen. A banana bears only one of them, and it dies as

soon as the fruit is gathered ; hence it is the custom to cut down the tree for the sake of its produce ; but, for one foot which they cut there spring up several others. The trunk of the banana is invested with several layers of a species of tough rind, of which the young natives make cords : its leaves are seven or eight feet long by eighteen or twenty inches broad ; they are almost as firm in consistency as our parchment ; they fold and unfold in a thousand ways without cracking; they may be made into parasols, and are generally used for covering pots and great vessels.

The banana is the bread of the rich as the manioc is that of the poor. It would not however be difficult so to multiply the banana as to make it yield an adequate quantity for the subsistence of the common people. A plain of bananas is never exhausted ; and it requires tillage only the first year.

The banana fig-tree does not differ from the banana except by its fruits ; they also grow in clusters or bunches, but they are not so long by half, and they have neither the same taste nor the same properties. The banana is a species of bread : the banana fig is a delicate fruit. The substance of the banana is hard and farinaceous ; that of the banana fig is soft and pulpy.

The lolo-tree is a tree which grows to the height of twenty-five or thirty feet on a proportional trunk. They do not give themselves the trouble of planting it ; the pippins of its fruits cast by chance reproduce it in great quantities around the villages. If its root alone be injured it withers and dies. Its fruit, which the natives call lolo, and we papaye, has an agreeable and saccharine taste; it pretty much resembles in colour and size our green melons ; but it has not a similar taste ; and it encloses a greater quantity of pippins. The lolo is of the number of those fruits which belong to the first passenger who thinks proper to gather them. The missionaries used to make a pretty good soup of it.

The orange and citron trees grow very fine in these climates, and produce excellent fruits but the culture of them is entirely neglected ; and there is but a very small number of them to be seen in and about the villages.

The cazou is a fruit of the size of a melon, which holds fifteen or twenty red oblong nuts, nearly of the size and form of a pigeon's egg ; their substance is farinaceous and very nourishing. The natives never neglect to carry some with them when they go on a journey ; a moderate quantity of these nuts will serve for their subsistence during a whole day. Apparently they are a species of the cacao; but the beholder is not within reach to verify this conjecture by inspecting the stalk.

The tonga is an oblong fruit of the size of an egg, which encloses a quantity of pippins of the size of a lentil. From fifty to a hundred grow upon one stalk two or three feet high. The camba differs only from the tonga by being flat instead of round. The fruit grows in Provence ; it is there called berengenne.

There is found in the Kingdom of Kakongo a tree about ten feet high, which in the season of drought bears peas little different from ours in the pod, grain, or even in the taste.

The tomata is a small fruit of the size and colour of a cherry ; the natives use it as an ingredient in their ragouts as we, use onions in ours, but it is from motives of economy and for the sake of filling up rather than of seasoning ; this fruit, absolutely insipid of itself, imbibes the taste of the sauce without communicating any to it whatever; it grows on a shrub.

The pimento is another shrub, which grows to the height of four or five feet; its leaves, pretty much resembling those of the pomegranate, are of the finest green. Its fruit is a grain very like that of barley in shape, but thicker and of a dazzling red. This shrub charms the sight when it is covered with fruit ; the fruit is the pepper of the country ; the natives put a great deal of it in most of their sauces ; but it is so violent that it burns the tongue and palate of the Europeans to such a degree as to make the skin peel off.

There are found in many wet and marshy places sugar canes of the same species with those of St. Domingo, but the natives have no idea of cultivating them ; they suck the pith of those which they find, and some individuals make a trade, of collecting them to carry to market.

On the plains are seen basilics which differ from ours by the height of their stalk, which may, be about eight feet.

The cotton-tree is a shrub of the height of five or six-feet ; it bears a sort of large green fruits, which are clad with a down of about a line in thickness ; this down is the cotton. When the fruit is ripe it opens and displays several rows of pippins, the remainder is good for nothing. The natives suffer the cotton also to perish, although it would not prove inferior in point of quality to that of America.

No vine has been seen in the country ; but there are some in several provinces beyond the Zaira, and they thrive there very well. The soil of Loango, Cacongo, and other circumjacent Kingdoms perhaps would not be less favourable to it; but the women, who alone take charge of the culture of the earth, and who are already weighed with labour, do not care to augment their task by planting the vine, the juice of which, moreover, would not be for them but for their husbands.

The fruit trees frequently bear fruits and flowers at the same time, and in all seasons ; the greater part resume their budding in and soils and even in the greatest drought.

The trees of the forests are covered with leaves at all seasons the old ones fall only to give place to the new ones; some produce fruits fit for eating, others are perennially covered with sterile flowers which scatter around, to a

great distance, the most agreeable odour. There occurs in the Kingdom of Jomba, which is to the north of Loango, a forest of red dye-wood. Among an infinite variety of trees of different kinds there is not to be found a single one resembling those we have in Europe. There are some of such prodigious girth that at a distance the beholder would take them for towers rather than for trees. The natives fell those only of middling size ; they hollow them into canoes of a single piece, which we call pyrogues, with which they go a fishing to sea and on the rivers.

Some of these trees are tender and spongy; they would resist the hatchet like the bark of the cork-tree; but they might easily be cut with a well-whet sabre; others are of a very hard wood. There are some to be found which, at the end of a few months after they have been felled, harden so much that they make anvils of them for forging red hot iron ; it would be an useless attempt to drive a nail into the wood with a hammer. The greater part of these trees perish by age and decay ; no one thinks of felling them, for no one would know what use to make of them.

CHAP. VI

Of the Animals.

THE inhabitants of these countries, certain of always finding manioc in their garden, trouble themselves very little about what they might procure wherewith to make good cheer. They prefer to found their hopes for the kitchen on the fortune of hunting or fishing, for days of banquet and regaling, to giving themselves the labour of rearing at their houses, cattle which the officers of the King might at any instant take away. They rear pigs, goats, and sheep. Their pigs are smaller than ours ; their goats yield no milk ; their sheep bear no fleeces of wool like those of European, climates; in other respects they quite resemble them.

They have ducks which bear crests, and are twice as large as ours ; but their fowls are very small ; they do not eat the eggs, because, they say, with a little patience an egg becomes a chicken. According to the same principle they say that the Europeans ought to pay them as dear for a couple of eggs as for a couple of chickens ; they however make some small abatement in the price, and if you bargain with them too much they answer coolly that they will wait until their eggs become chickens. It is in vain to object to them on the score of what these chickens will cost them before they are good to eat, because they do not fatten them; the mother takes them away with her into the plain, where they live with her at large like other birds. Those who say that for the value of six sous thirty fowls may be had in the Kingdom of Loango, are as grossly mistaken as when they pretend that fowls are fold at a pistole a-piece in the Kingdom of Congo ; but I doubt not that they deceive anybody ; there is no reader credulous enough to rely on the testimony of

an historian, when he tells him that thirty fowls which sell for a hundred crowns in one Kingdom are sold for six sous in the neighbouring Kingdom.

Dogs and cats are to be found in this country. The cats have a longer muzzle than ours ; the dogs do not bark. A missionary saw on the confines of Loango a bay horse which was bounding over the plain; he was of good height, and very handsome ; he suffered himself to be approached very closely. At the moment when the missionary was regarding him, the minister for foreign affairs was coming by; he stopped and told the missionary that he knew that the horse would be very useful to him in the journey he proposed to take through the country ; that if he liked he might make a good bargain of him. The missionary agreed to it, on condition that he should deliver it to him ; but the difficulty of getting to put the bridle on him terminated the business. The tradition is, that the king of England formerly sent two horses, a male and a female, to the King of Loango; that this Prince, after having examined them, ordered them to be set at liberty ; that from that time they had, wandered over the plains and forests, where they bred young ones; that the horse, which was sometimes seen near Loango, was the lait of his species, the others being dead of old age, or having been worried by the tygers.

The plains feed a number of animals of all kinds ; quadrupeds, birds, and insects. No hares or rabbits have ever been seen there ; but there are two or three sorts of partridges to be found; some of them have plumage of the brightest red; those of every kind are as big as our hens. The quails and larks have nothing which distinguishes them from those of Europe. Only one kind of pigeon has ever been seen there ; its plumage is green, but its claws, beak, and eyes, are of a fine red . There is a certain bird of the size and pretty nearly the form of a turkey, but has a larger head, and bears, instead of a crest, a pierced horn like a horn at trictrac. A native came one day to the missionaries to offer them for sale an aquatic bird, which was much larger than the largest that we see in France ; he had his load of it ; but hearing them answer that they would not buy it, he did not leave them much time to examine it ; they only saw that it had a neck as long as an arm, and that it was as big as a sheep. The eagles are like those which are shown in our fairs. The crow differs in no respect from ours. There is a variety of other birds of prey. At the season when the natives set fire to the grass on the plains they are seen to fly over the flames. If they perceive any animal which has suffered itself to be overtaken by the fire, they pounce on him with impetuosity and carry him, away half roasted, without getting their wings at all damaged by the blaze. There are many nocturnal birds. The owl is as big as a turkey. The cuckoo is called coucou ; it-is a little, bigger than ours, and resembles it in plumage, but sings differently. The male begins to chant coo, coo, coo, mounting one note above another with as much precision as a musician would sound his ut, re, mi. When he has got to the third note the female takes it up, and ascends with it to the octave ; and

they always recommence the same song. The swallow is the same with that which we see in Europe, but its flight is more uniform.

The sparrows breed numerously ; they fly in flocks like ours ; they chirp, in the same way; they are a little smaller, their plumage is finer and softer, and it shines like, satin.

The grasshopper is of the size of a small bird. It has a piercing and importunate cry ; it makes a great noise in the air ; you would think by the beating of its wings that a bird, of prey was hovering around. Another insect, of the size of a May-bug, is of the greatest, utility in so hot a climate; it is the scavenger and dustman of the whole country. It labours with indefatigable assiduity to, collect all the filth, that might infest the air, and makes small balls of it, which it hides very deep in holes which it has dug in the earth. It breeds in sufficient numbers to keep the towns and villages clean.

The shining or firefly flies by night, and bears a pretty strong light. It might be taken in a dark night for one of those exhalations which we call falling stars. The missionaries have examined some which came to rest on their huts ; they remarked their bodies were of the size of our glow-worms, and that near the wings they did not differ greatly from them in shape ; which inclined them to judge that these insects, might be a variety of the same species.

The grass of the plains serves as a retreat to an infinite number of rats of different kinds ; the largest of which are of the size of our cats. Here are also frogs and toads larger than ours ; and a snail of the size of one's arm.

The woods are filled with all kinds of animals. The elephants of the country differ only from those which have been described to us by being in general smaller. Their largest tusks weigh only from fifty to sixty pounds. The natives do not dread them, and they never hunt them. The tusks they sell to the Europeans are those which they have found in the woods. The ivory of Loango is in great repute for its fineness and whiteness.

The missionaries have observed in passing along a forest, the track of an animal which they have never seen but it must be monstrous, the prints of its claws are seen on the earth, and formed an impression on it of about three feet in circumference. In observing the posture and disposition of the footsteps, they concluded that it did not run in this part of its way, and that it carried its claws at the distance of seven or eight feet one from the other.

The lion resembles those of middling size which are seen in Europe.

The tiger is much more dreaded in these countries than the lion ; there are two species of them, without reckoning the tiger cat, which eats field mice, the young of birds, and sometimes fowls and ducks. The tigers of the first

species are called tigers of the woods, the others grass-tygers, from the place where they are accustomed to prowl for food. The grass-tygers are of the size of our great dogs ; they hunt rats and other animals which lurk in the grass, which the uncultivated lands produce; they sometimes approach the huts by night to carry away fowls and other domestic animals ; but they take to flight as soon as they perceive a man. The wood-tyger is much bigger and taller than the former. He makes prey on the strongest animals, such as buffaloes and deer ; lie couches for them as they pass, leaps on their croup, tears them with his claws and teeth and never leaves hold until he has made them fall beneath him ; when this carnivorous animal is pressed by hunger, he comes out of the woods, and prowls by night round the villages, seeking to devour dogs, pigs, sheep, and goats.

Near the place where the missionaries are settled, one of these tigers having sallied forth at dusk from a neighbouring forest, carried off a little child whom his mother was bringing from the fields on her back ; he then fled with precipitation to devour his prey in the forest. It is not safe to pass alone through a wood, without being well armed. The tiger has a keen smell and piercing sight ; he scents a man from a great distance; if he sees him alone and unarmed, he draws near to attack him ; otherwise he shuns the encounter. It is very rare that a hunter perceives him within gunshot.

When a native has killed one of these tigers, he walks about, as if in triumph, among the villages, supported and attended by his friends; he then carries the beast to the chief, who immediately pays him a reward proposed by the government, for him who

diminishes the number of sanguinary animals. When a tiger has devoured some animal in a village the peasants are sure that he will not escape them the following night; they tie the remains of his prey (if he has left any) to a stake ; or they lay a new bait for him ; they tie cords to it, which communicate with guns disposed in such a manner that they must necessarily discharge themselves on the tiger, if he comes to bite at the bait; he seldom fails to return on the following night ; he falls by his own means.

The discharge of the guns is the signal which bids the natives go and dispatch him, should he be still alive.

The buffalo is not reckoned among the domestic animals as in China ; he is wild and ferocious; he wanders in the woods and dessert plains, which he causes to resound with his disagreeable lowings and roarings ; he is rather taller than our common oxen ; from which, in other respects, he does not essentially differ. The buffalo does not flee before the hunter; and if the latter misses his aim, and has not time to climb a tree, he is instantly torn to pieces. When this animal cannot wreak his vengeance on him who has

wounded him, he runs about seeking a chance victim for his fury. Woe to the first passenger whom he perceives, man, woman or child ; it is all over with him! Of a fatality of this kind, the missionaries were once witnesses. One of these buffaloes having rallied from the woods , turned on, a woman who was buried in cultivating her field ; he threw her on the ground, and never quitted her until she had expired in a most tragically way.

The wild-boars multiply slowly; they feed on the roots of trees and tender wood they are smaller and less ferocious than those which feed on acorns in our European forests.

The animal which the natives denominate a wild dog is a species of wolf, which much resembles those we see in France; as he does not hold rule over the woods he is more modest than ours; a man never fears to encounter him. He does not bend his view on the larger prey, these he leaves to the lion and the tiger, who do not even spare him when he falls under their paws; for want of other food he sometimes browses grass and eats roots like a goat.

The monkeys seclude themselves generally in the interior of the forest; they seldom walk on the ground; they are always seen perching on the highest trees. This however does not hinder them, when pursued from making a deal of way in a short time, leaping from branch to branch and from tree to tree. The natives aim less at killing the monkeys than at taking them alive, to sell to the Europeans. The way to take them is to strew at the foot of the trees, whither they are wont to retire, such fruits as they most relish, under which the snares are laid. The ape has always her young one at her side; she carries it with her when she is pursued, and never abandons it but when she is mortally wounded. There are in the forests of this country baboons four feet high; the natives affirm that when they are hard pushed they come down from the trees with sticks in their hands to defend themselves against those who are hunting them, and that very often they chase their pursuers. The missionaries never witnessed this singularity.

The roebuck and deer are not rare in the forests, they differ in no way from those of Europe. The deer are smaller than ours and have no horns; the privation of this attribute is of great advantage to them in the thick forests, where they are continually liable to be hunted by carnivorous animals.

On the plains may be seen bounding along a stag, whom the smallness of his make renders an object of great curiosity. He resembles at all points the stags of the country ; like them he wants horns, he has a forked foot, a fine and limber leg ; he is nearly as big as a hare, but slenderer; his size is from twelve to fifteen inches. Although he runs very light, he is sometimes caught by hand. His most ordinary retreat is among the long grass of untilled lands, which are to him what the trees of the forests are to the others. When the natives perceive him they take up a great quantity of cover, and, closing by degrees, hem in the stag. When this little animal sees himself surrounded,

he no longer thinks of escaping, but suffers himself to be taken; but he is unable to survive the loss of his liberty; if he be not killed he soon dies of grief, or he kills himself against the bars of the cage in which they have confined him ; his flesh affords delicate eating.

The forests are filled much more than the plains with an infinity of birds of the prettiest plumage ; but richness of colour is all they possess one never sees enough of them ; one hears too much of them ; their song is feeble and broken ; even the nightingale does nothing but warble; he is larger than ours.

Pheasants and guinea-hens are very common. Parrots and parroquets are not more rare : the natives take them from their nests to sell to the Europeans.

They distinguish two kinds of turtledove ; there is one not larger than a thrush which has ash-coloured plumage; the other is of the figure and size of ours ; she has the same plumage, and her wing is the same.

The natives do not yet know the art of domesticating bees, and making them labour on their account, by procuring abodes for them. The forests are the ordinary, retreat of this industrious insect. The hollow of a tree serves him for a hive, and he there deposits his combs. The bees of Africa work like the bees of Europe ; and from flowers entirely different extract the same honey and the same wax; without having their model communicated they copy it perfectly. On both hands there is the same wisdom in the preparations ; the same regularity in the proportions, the same activity in the execution ; there is no difficulty in perceiving that they are instructed by the same master. The honey which they yield is very delicate ; the natives make a regale of it ; they suck the comb and throw away the wax. They do not stifle the bees to obtain their honey; they make fire under the tree whole hollow serves for their retreat. The smoke makes them come out ; the honey is then taken ; the bees then re-enter the same tree, or seek a dwelling elsewhere.

Here are ants of several species ; there is one much larger than ours, she has equal foresight and application to labours ; and it is in this country that one might more effectually than in any other send men to his school, in the words of the Sage. These insects in the time of drought eagerly gather food for their subsistence during the rainy season. In order to defend themselves against the inundation's, they build, by dint of labour, small houses of glazed earth (potters' clay) which acquire almost the solidity of stone. The natives, on overturning them, make chafing dishes of them, which are much like our earthen chafing dishes, and they have no others.

In the thickest forests, where the rays of the sun never penetrate, there are many serpents. The most common is that which they call the serpent Boma, which is about fifteen feet long, and thick in proportion; sometimes there are

some found of much larger size. They told the missionaries that six months before their arrival in the country a little child had gone to the woods to take birds nests (almost the only occupation of children) ; his father finding that he tarried long, armed himself, as if for the chase, with his sabre and his gun to go and seek him ; on advancing into the forest by the most frequented road he perceived a serpent of enormous size ; not doubting that he was the murderer of his son he attacked and killed him. Having opened the carcase he found the child, enclosed in its belly as in a coffin ; it was dead, but had received no wound. The natives eat the serpents which they kill, and the flesh is not bad. When the Europeans ask them why they feed on these animals? they themselves ask, why the Europeans do not feed on them? and they add, that if there is an animal which they ought to eat, it is most certainly that which seeks to eat them.

The rivers breed fine fish in great quantities; that which they fish from the stream of the Zaire is very delicate. There are also fish-breeding lakes in this country; there is one near the village of Kilonga, where the missionaries formed their first establishment. it abounds in fish of several species. Its carps are similar to those of our rivers in France, but more delicate. They fish up fine eels, which are much different from ours; they have a flat and very thick head; their teeth are not edged; and they much resemble in form and size the grinaers of a man. Some rivers breed snakes, which are like small serpents.

The sea coasts are frequented by regular professed fishermen; they take most generally a great quantity of ray and soles of different kinds. Although they embark only in perogues they sometimes take very large draughts and great fish. I have had in my hands a jaw which must have belonged to a monstrous fish; its teeth are twenty-four lines in circumference by twenty-nine in height ; they are fixed in sockets twenty-two lines in depth ; they are pretty well-edged at the extremity.

On the coasts of Loango there is a species of mischievous fish, which often occasions damage to European captains ; it has a head three times as large as that of an ox ; it has a great passion for staving barks and canoes ; it approaches the places where the vessels are at anchor ; it raises its neck above the water ; and if it perceives a canoe it darts up to it with impetuosity ; staves it at the first onset with its head, and takes to flight; it disdains the perogues ; and never attacks them.

The nets of the natives are wrought much in the same way as those of our fishermen; they make them of a flax filament, which would not yield in strength to the best hemp; and this they procure from the banana-tree and from the bark of some other trees. It is not their practice to salt their fish, in order to preserve it. They dry it in the sun; if it be hot enough; but more frequently they smoke it.

CHAP. VII. - Societies

The people of these countries, like ourselves inhabit towns and villages, and they present a most striking image of the origin of society. They are not drawn together so much by reciprocal wants as by ties of blood, which hinder them from separating. The families do not disperse, as with us, so that in the same town and even in the same village you discern an infinite number of little hamlets, which are so many families, each having its patriarch for a president. A family which finds itself too crowded and does not wish to confound itself with the neighbouring one, may go and settle on the first piece of land which is not already occupied, and there found a hamlet ; it is the affair of a single day, in a country where the father of a family is able, with the help of his wife and children, to carry away at one journey his house and all his furniture, goods and chattels. The heads of families are the first judges of them. When any dispute has arisen among them, they confront the parties; and after hearing the pleadings on both sides, they pronounce a sort of sentence in juridical form. This domestic tribunal is the model of the other superior tribunals. The laws do not allow a woman to appeal from the sentence of her husband nor a son from the judgment of his father; indeed, they never think of doing so ; but in the sequel we shall see that from the tribunal of the chief of each village there is a power of appeal to the governor of the province, and, lastly, to the King.

The country is not equally peopled throughout; the towns and villages are most frequent along the banks of the rivers, the streamlets lakes and the fountains ; because, doubtless, water being one of the most essential necessities of life, they who have the choice of land give the preference to that which offers it naturally, and leave the care of digging wells to the last comers. Those great and superb towns which are to be seen, all built along rivers, have had no other origin ; and if we could interrogate the first founders of Paris, they would answer that in erecting their huts on the same spots where we have since constructed palaces, they, like the people in question, thought of procuring a supply of healthy water to quench their thirst and wash their flocks ; and had not the smallest idea of building a town, still less of kindling its future splendour by the ease afforded it of extending its commerce.

The towns are, properly speaking, only great villages; they differ from them solely in containing a greater number of inhabitants. Grass grows in them, as in the villages; the streets are merely narrow pathways. A great town is really a labyrinth; whence a stranger could never get out if he had not the precaution to take a guide with him. The citizens have nothing which distinguishes them from Villagers ; they are neither better clothed nor better lodged. The female citizens of the capital go to work in the fields, like the peasant girls of the smallest hamlet.

The vast forest of which we have been speaking would furnish the natives with the means of lodging and sheltering themselves very commodiously, if they would only give themselves the trouble; they might even, for want of stone, which is nowhere to be found in this country, make use of bricks, which might be worked from almost all the kinds of earth which the land contains. The woods would supply them with the fuel necessary for burning them. Their houses, which we call huts, are small cabins made of rushes or branches pretty skilfully interwoven. The covering corresponds to the structure ; it consists merely of leaves ; they use in preference those of the palm-tree, which are of sufficient consistency to resist for several years the rains and the vicissitudes of the weather. The door of the house is worked into one of the gable-ends, which they take care shall not be exposed to the wind in the rainy quarter. The people know not the use of windows. It is well known that we ourselves, not long ago, had only very small ones, as many of our ancient castles sufficiently evince. Even now in many of our provinces old huts are found which admit the light only by a little door cut in the roof.

Any person in want of a house goes to market with his wife and children. He buys that which suits him. Each one takes an article or piece according to his strength, and they go to put it in order. To hinder it from being blown down by the wind they tie it to stakes driven deep into the ground. A house of this kind has nothing disagreeable in its appearance ; it is a sort of large basket turned upside down. The rich and knowing ones sometimes have their dwellings worked with a deal of art, and lined with mats of different colours, which are the ordinary tapestry of the country.

They who tell us that the inhabitants of Loango make beams to their houses of the palm-tree have no idea of such habitations ; and they know not that if they wished to erect edifices similar to ours they might find timber of every kind in their forests, much preferable to the palm-wood for this use. The King of Loango's palace, as several authors describe it to us, bears less resemblance to the real abode of that Prince than our palace of the Thuilleries bears to the convent of the Capuchins. They assign to this palace the extent of one ordinary town, yet it is composed only of five or six huts, rather larger than those we have been speaking of ; while the towns, on the contrary, contain thousands of them.

CHAP. VIII. - The Characters of the People. Their Vices and Virtues.

The author of the General History of Voyages expatiates greatly on the manners of these people, and also on their customs and usages. In his collection he has inserted different relations of what passes among them; but after having perused them one might be led to ask if those who composed them had ever been in the country? It is from this common source that several writers of our days have drawn the errors which they have published respecting the inhabitants of this country, and they have

given us, doubtless unintentionally, imaginary portraits for indubitable fads. The more judicious among them, it is true, shocked at the manifest contradictions which they meet in each page of these relations, have contented themselves with extracting what appeared to them the most probable; but even the little they have extracted is too much for any one who wants nothing but truth, and is sufficient to demonstrate to any one who has lived among those people, that they have not been painted to the life.

No one can thoroughly know the genius of the people without studying it, and such a study is not the work of a few days. A traveller, supposing one in good earned, who travels with his journal in his hand through an unknown country, the language of which he does not understand, cannot acquire anything but a very superficial knowledge of the people who inhabit it. If by chance he should for several days in succession be witness of some traits of cruelty and perfidy, he will represent the people as cruel and perfidious. If he should have taken another route, and witnessed some acts displaying opposite virtues, (opposite) he passes an eulogium on their love of justice and humanity.

The relations of mariners are not always trustworthy, and ought not to fix our judgment on this matter any more than those of a traveller such as I am supposing. Not only does their business deprive them of leisure to become observers, they are not within the reach of becoming such ; having no connection with any except the small number of trafficking Africans who, from a spirit of gain and a greater facility of satisfying their passions, have corrupted the virtues which distinguish the bulk of the nation.

It must be confessed that those who dwell along the coasts, and the only persons who frequent the Europeans, appear inclined to fraud and libertinism; but can we reasonably conclude from that, without further examination, as most historians do, that irregularity and double dealing are vices common to all? We should laugh at the simplicity of an African who, after having passed some time at Paris without ever going a league from the town, should go and tell his own countrymen that our country people do nothing but drink, dance, and divert themselves; because in traversing the villages in the neighbourhood of the capital he might have heard the noise of instruments, and seen written on the wall " here they keep weddings and feasts." This barbarian would Judge of our nation as we judge of his.

Although the Kingdom of Congo borders upon those of which we are now speaking, we have no, right to judge of its inhabitants by comparison, and attribute to the one what we know of the other. There may have been a time when these people resembled each other, but that time is no more. No one can deny that the stay which the Portuguese have made in Congo must have altered in a great degree the innocence and simplicity of the manners of its inhabitants. I shall however take great care not to impute to a holy and divine religion abuses which it condemns, and evils which call its groans. We

must shut our eyes to the light of the sun, and be in fact as ill informed in history as certain modern philosophers appear to be in this point, to be ignorant from what an abyss of corruption the Christian religion has snatched mankind. All that can reasonably be concluded from this decline of manners, which has followed the preaching of the gospel in Congo and elsewhere, is, that if it be worthy the zeal of a Christian prince to favour the propagation of the faith among infidel nations, it is also worthy of his prudence and his duty not to destroy with one hand what he builds up with the other, by sending on the track of the missionaries a set of men who have nothing of the Christian but the name, which they dishonour, and whose worse than heathenish conduct makes the idolaters doubt whether the gods whom they worship be not preferable even to that of the Christian. Religion, such is the might of the empire of grace, had never ceased to make some progress in Congo ; and among all the licentiousness to which the Portuguese abandoned themselves, barbarians who had become Christians recalled them to a sense of their duty, and condemned their excesses by the practice of contrary virtues.

But since the natives of the country have driven out the Portuguese, and they no longer receive any but missionaries among them ; the latter find it a much more easy task to persuade them to the practice of evangelical morality. Cardinal Castelli, president of the congregation of the Propaganda, writes from Rome to the prefect of the mission of Loango, that there are actually more than one hundred thousand Christians in the single Kingdom of Congo. But the Capuchins, who, since the dissolution of the Jesuits, have succeeded to the charge of this vast and laborious mission beginning themselves to be in want of subjects, this flourishing branch of Christianity, if the hand which first formed it do not still support it, runs the risque of seeing itself destitute in a short time of the most needful helps.

They who give to the citizens of Loango, Kakongo, and N'Goyo, the characters and manners of the slaves whom we draw from among them for our colonies, are the most grossly mistaken of all ; since they judge of a nation by its most deadly enemies, and by the most desperate of its subjects. If they do sell us some slaves of the country, they are those whom their crimes have rendered unworthy of being citizens. But most of those whom we buy are taken in war from other savage nations, and who sympathize so little with the people in question, that they have never had either peace or truce with them. Those slaves in general have many bad qualities without any mixture of good ones : they must be made into good men before any thing can be done towards making them Christians. They frequent, the despair of slavery seems to close their heart against virtue.

The missionaries, since their settlement among nations whom the holy see has confided to their zeal, have applied themselves by living, and conversing among them, to the task of ascertaining their genius and manners, their qualities of mind and heart, their vices and virtues ; and the result of their observations seems to me to form a strong prepossession for them.

These people, generally speaking, have no application; but they seem capable of acquiring that habit, as it is always necessity which commands application; and as they have scarcely any necessities, it is natural that their minds should remain in a sort of inertness, or that it should be never exercised except on frivolous objects, which amuse without engaging. Those who trade, or who have the management of public affairs, want neither application nor activity, and the people themselves as soon as you present to them an object capable of arousing and interesting them, such as religion, will engage in and pursue it; as experience has already shown.

Sloth of body with them generally accompanies mental idleness. This vice however does not necessarily affect the nation, since it does not belong to the weaker sex. The women, inured from childhood to the hardest toils of husbandry, give themselves up to it with indefatigable ardour. The heat, it is true, invites man to repose but a powerful interest awakes him, and renders him superior to the climate and to himself. Our own country people are never more active than in the season of the greatest heats, because it is that of harvest. It is known that the people of ancient Latium inhabited the mild climate of Italy; and their patriotism led them to triumph over the warlike hordes of the north. The Christian religion, which forbids idleness, and which is unwilling that Society should support that person who refuses to labour for it, would in sensibly induce men to labour, as education accustoms women to it; this is seen among, the Christians of Congo.

These defects, which are not irremediable, and which circumstances seem still to excuse, are moreover amply compensated by natural qualities and moral virtues, which in heathens are truly worthy of admiration. They are remarkable for a sound and penetrating mind ; when the truths of the Faith are explained to them, some make objections specious enough ; others make reflections full of good sense, or ask ingenious questions, which shew that they perfectly comprehend what is proposed to them.

They are endowed with a happy memory. The missionaries saw some who within a month have repeated God's commandments which they had heard only once recited in a public place. They make no use however of this faculty, for transmitting to future ages what passes among them that is memorable, assuming as a principle that they should confine themselves to what is strictly necessary, as well for knowledge as for the wants of life; they all live, with regard to history, in that indifference which characterizes the inhabitants of our country places, who know no more of what passed in France under Louis the Great, than under Julius Caesar. If you ask them why they do not preserve the remembrance of what has been done by their fathers? they answer, that it signifies little to know how the dead have lived ; the main point is, that the living, should be honest people. According to the same principle, they keep no account of their age: "It would be," say they, "loading one's memory with an useless reckoning, since it does not binder us from dying, and gives us no insight into the term of one's life." They regard

death as a precipice to which man hastens blindfold, so that it is of no use to him; to count his steps, because he can neither perceive when he comes to the last, nor can he avoid it ; that is no bad excuse.

The people of these countries, men and women, are very fond of talking and singing; whence it would appear that nature is riot consistent with herself; for all the other animals are silent night and day. No song of birds is heard in the forests; the cock never awakes his master, even the dogs cannot bark. But amid this general silence, the women as they till the field make it echo with their rustic songs; and the men pass their time in telling stories, and in discoursing on the most trifling topics. The after noon is their particular time for holding their assemblies under the shade of a spreading tufted tree. They sit on the ground, in circles, cross legged. Most of them have a pipe in their mouths. Those who have palm wine bring some with them; and now and then they interrupt the speaking to drink, a draught, passing the calabash round. He who begins the conversation sometimes speaks a quarter of an hour at a time. Every one listens in deep silence; another takes up the talk, and they, listen in the same manner; no one who speaks is ever interrupted. But when he has ceased to utter his tattle, the person whose turn it is to speak has a right to oppose him and utter his own. To see the fury which they throw into their declamations one would think they were cussing the thorniest subjects, and it is a matter of great surprise when on lending an ear, one finds that the argument is a wretched earthen pot or a bird's feather, or some superstitious observances. Any one who attends their conversation and does not understand the language, might easily take it for a child's play. They have a usage among them singular enough, and well devised for keeping awake the attention of the hearers, and give a zest to conversations in themselves so stale ; when they speak in public they express numbers by gestures. He, for example, who would say, "I have seen six parrots and four partridges," says simply "I have seen - parrots and - partridges," and he makes at the same time two signs, one of which tells for six and the other for four, at the same time all present cry out six, four, and the talker goes on. If any one would seem puzzled, or pronounces after the rest, they would suppose him to have been asleep or in a reverie, and he would be considered impolite.

These people are very mild. Disputes and contests are rare among them; and they seldom or never come to blows. If they cannot agree they go and find a judge, who reconciles them in an instant. What a modern Historian says (The author of the General History of Asia, Africa, and America, tom 12), that the inhabitants of Loango immolate their slaves to the manes of their Kings, is an assertion destitute of the slightest foundation. They have not even an idea of those abominable sacrifices.

The trafficking Africans, who inhabit the coasts, are for the greater part mistrustful and self-interested, even to roguery. Holding as a principle that all the whites are accountable one for another, they would make no scruple

of cheating a Frenchman if they could ; because ten years before they themselves would have cheated the English. But rapine and duplicity are by no means the character of the nation. On the contrary it is remarked that those who inhabit the interior of the lands, unite to a great deal of justice and frankness, a disinterestedness which may be called excessive. They literally follow the precept of the Gospel, not to take thought for the morrow. They do not even surmise that food and clothing ever can fail. They are always ready to share the little they have with those whom they know to be in need. If they have been fortunate in hunting or fishing, or have procured something rare, they immediately run and tell their friends and neighbours, taking to each his share. They would choose to stint themselves rather than not give them this proof of their friendship. The reproach of avarice is the most cutting that can be made to any of them, and no species of flattery is more agreeable than to praise them for their freedom in giving; and to say that they always give with open hand. They call the Europeans close fists, because they give nothing for nothing.

Politeness is not foreign to them. They anticipate each other with reciprocal deference's. They are especially attentive to the manner of giving and receiving salutations. If it be an equal that they meet, they make one genuflection, rise and clap their hands. He who meets a man who is markedly his superior, prostrates himself, bows his head, touches the ground with the ends of his fingers, draws them to his mouth, and, as he lifts them up, claps his hands. The person thus saluted, be it a Prince or even a King, never avoids returning the salute, making the genuflection and clapping hands.

They are humane and obliging even to strangers, and to those from whom they have nothing to expect in return. They have no inns among them. A traveller, who passes through a village at the hour of repast, enters, without ceremony, into the first hut, and is quite welcome.

The master of the house regales him with the best he has; and after he has reposed awhile conducts him on his way. The missionaries often undertake their journeys without provisions, or merchandise wherewith to procure any; they are humanely and hospitably received every where, nor have they ever wanted any of the necessities of life.

When a native perceives that his guest does not eat heartily, he picks out the best morsel in the dish, bites of it, and presents him the rest, saying "Eat, and take my word for it". This politeness is very far from our manners, but it is quite true to nature; one may see two little children in an orchard give and take the fruits that they have first tasted by setting their teeth in them.

During the last war we had with England, a French ship having run aground on the coast of Loango, two or three sailors saved themselves by swimming,

and retired into a village called Loubou. The inhabitants of the place received them kindly, and provided generously for their wants. They lodged, fed and clothed them for several years, without requiring any labour from them; all their occupation was to go and walk along the coast, and when they discovered a vessel, they used to inform the natives, who put them into a pirogue to go and reconnoiter her. If she was English, they returned with great haste, for fear lest their guests should fall into the hands of their enemies. They conducted themselves towards the sailors in this manner until they found a favourable opportunity of returning to France, without ever expressing any grudge at the expense which their sojourn occasioned. It was in the very village where this took place that the missionaries heard of it.

In one thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven, the prefect of the mission received a visit from a naval officer, who said, that having learnt that some French priests had arrived at Loango, he had repaired thither to confess himself, and to render thanks unto God along with them, for his having escaped the most imminent danger. He told them he had embarked in a ship from St. Malo ; that the captain of it, seeing a floating island which pressed close upon his quarter, had sent out a canoe with four sailors, to cut grass on it ; but that they, being drawn by the violence of the currents, had ruled against the waves for four days and four nights, without being able to regain their ship ; that at length on the fifth day, the wind drove their boat on shore of the four sailors who accompanied the officer, two had died of hunger and fatigue; a third had expired on the coast on getting out of the canoe. The officer and the sailor who were left, trailed on as well as they could to the next village. The inhabitants hastened to comfort them, and treated them very hospitably in every respect. When they were disposed to quit the place, the people assured them that they might still stay as long as they pleased, without fear of being chargeable to any one. They laid in no provision of food when they set out from Loango ; the people in all the villages where they stopped, offered them liberally whatever they wanted ; and this treatment they met with along their whole course, to the end of their journey.

These people are poor, compared with us ; but in truth, he who wants nothing is as rich as he who has every thing in plenty, and he lives much more contented. In our way of life, we should think that man the most to be pitied, who had not the means of procuring a bed to lie on or seat to sit on: at Loango, it would be sentencing a man to actual punishment to oblige him to pass one night in a good bed, or to remain two hours in an armchair. The Mateia of Kakongo, one of the most powerful Princes in the Kingdom, has an apartment furnished in the European style; there are beds, commodes, beaufets garnished with silver mounting. The Prince offers seats to the Europeans who go to visit him ; as for himself, he finds it much more convenient to sit on the ground, according to the custom of the country. With these people, nothing is known either of houses of office, cellars,

granaries or wardrobes. In entering a hut you perceive a mat, which is the master's bed, his table, and his seats; some earthen vessels, which constitute his kitchen tackle; some roots and fruits, these are his belly-provisions. When they take a piece of game or a fish, they make a ragout of it, which Europeans deem detestable, but to their taste it is delicious. If hunting or fishing furnishes them nothing for their table, they flick to their roots and fruits; and, they always appear content with what they are eating. If a stranger comes upon them, and they have only manioc to offer him, they make no excuse for making him partake such poor cheer; supposing that he ought to, think it is because they have nothing better to offer him.

Reared in the midst of plenty, or at least in a good opinion of our own comforts of life, and of the wealth which procures them, we feel ourselves naturally led to, despise a people so simple and poor; but if, they themselves understanding that we are, the laborious artisans of a thousand wants which they never experienced; if, witnessing our delicacies, our profusion's, and the luxuries of our tables, they paid us back scorn for scorn, and said they were wiser than we were, I should doubt whether an impartial umpire would decide the difference in our favour.

It is an opinion which daily gains credit, that licentiousness of manners among these people is carried to very dissoluteness; thus aver the modern authors who treat on this country. Pretended travellers, sporting with the good faith of the public, are not afraid of stating, that prostitution's, adultery, and the most monstrous excesses of debauchery, are tricks of custom among them, to such a degree, that husbands themselves favour the lightness of their wives, and that the obsequies of their dead are celebrated by abominations and infamy. A mercenary writer has little respect for truth, when he finds his account in disguising it. Such is the case here; he is lure of giving pleasure by licentious tales to that numerous class of frivolous and libertine readers, who seize with avidity all that seems to ennoble their weakness, or to extend over thousands the empire of those passions which rule them. And notwithstanding, it is after these calumnious relations that systems are built, and hence we affirm very gravely, that the Christian religion can never be the religion of all climates; for the chastity which it prescribes, forms an invincible obstacle to its establishment in torrid climates, and under the burning zone.

But they, who from the recesses of their cabinets, calculate, after their own way, the influence of climate on manners, and who make no difficulty in assigning (compass in hand) the regions beyond which the worship and religion of the true God cannot be extended; those pretended sages, I say, ought to take heed how they thus constitute themselves accusers and judges of the Divinity; for, supposing that they belong not to that horde of madmen, who regard the universe as the production of a blind agent, or the sport of chance, I would only wish to say this, to confound them "explain to

us how it could have happened, that he who has ordained times and formed seasons ; who has divided the climates and presided over the general economy of the universe, should have so strangely miscalculated to his own disadvantage, by offering an abode to a great portion of his creatures, in regions where his name could never be known aright, and where his law would be despised ?" But providence has justified itself from this reproach, long before any one thought of making it. No one can be ignorant that it was in the hottest climates that the Christian religion operated the greatest miracles; it was in the midst of the arid deserts and burning sands of the Thebais, that during many ages, whole millions of solitary men, before the admiring eyes of the whole world, preserved the most perfect chastity, and led a life totally angelic.

But whatever may be the result of observations made on other people, they cannot destroy those which the missionaries have made for many years, on those of whom we are speaking. To lit in true judgment, we must have seen every thing, calculated every thing ; the heat of the climate, if it is tempered by a sober and frugal life, will always be much less hurtful to chastity, than other stimulants in the coldest countries than the wines, the succulent viands, the sights, the impassioned accents of music, the licentious writings, the association and, intercourse of young persons of both sexes ; baits of voluptuousness which are quite unknown among the people in question. They feed habitually on roots, vegetables, and fruits ; they drink water; they lie on hard surfaces; they are chaste as it were, by nature, and without the efforts of virtue. They, however, attach honour to the practice of chastity, and shame to the contrary vices. An author, cited in the General History of Voyages, says, that at Loango they are persuaded that the crime of a maid who has not resisted seduction, would be sufficient to draw down a total ruin on the whole country, were it not expiated by a public avowal made to the King; and the same, writer, impelled by I know not what kind of blind bias for calumniating the manners of this people, adds, that this avowal, however, has nothing in it humiliating. But it is easy to judge, that a fault which is deemed sufficiently enormous to provoke the wrath of Heaven, must condemn to opprobrium and shame, the culprit who is obliged to make the avowal.

A man, as we shall soon see, may marry, as many women as he finds willing to attach themselves to him ; but it is an unheard-of thing for a man and woman to cohabit publicly, without being lawfully espoused. There are never seen in this country, as in the great towns of Europe, any of those societies of women, who keep a school of debauchery.

They would not suffer them to traffic shamefully with their honour, by walking in the streets ; still less would they be allowed to exercise the infamous trade of seducing and corrupting youth. The language, though very rich, offers no term which corresponds with that of a female debauchee ; it is expressed by a Portuguese word.

The women have, like the men, their arms and bosoms uncovered, especially when at work ; but the custom is general; no one thinks of it ; no one is scandalized at it ; and it is on with authors to have concluded thence, that they brave all the laws of modesty, this nudity of a Negress who from morning to night is occupied in cultivating the field under a burning sun, is less insidious and less shocking to public decency, in that country, than the half-nakedness of our court ladies among us.

Whenever the missionaries found themselves among the inhabitants of the country, in the passage of rivers where there are no boats, they observed, that when a woman entered the water, all the men turned away their eyes until she had got to the other side ; the women on their part, do the same when the men pass.

The young girls accompany their mothers every where, who require from them the strictest reserve. A youth durst not speak to a girl, except in her mother's presence; he cannot make her a present except when he asks her in marriage. A missionary one day met a little Negress returning from the fields with her mother; she said to him in the language of the country, and in a jocular tone, "Good day, man of God!" Her mother immediately gave her a severe reprimand for having spoken to a man, and with so little reserve. Dancing is in this country a daily exercise, but the men never dance except with men, nor the women except with women. The songs of joy, which generally accompany their dances, have nothing in them offensive to modesty.

CHAP. IX

Of Marriages and Alliances.

Polygamy is authorized by the national laws, and it is allowable for a man to marry as many women as he thinks proper; but this liberty which the law allows, is restrained by nature. The number of women a man among them does, not appear to surpass that of the men, perhaps it does not even reach it; so that a Grandee of the country cannot marry twenty women, without placing nineteen of his fellow citizens tinder the necessity of observing celibacy. Besides, a woman generally prefers the advantage of being the sole spouse of an individual, to the honor of being the wife of a lord, who must give her a great number of rivals; thus it is only the rich who can use the privilege, or rather the abuse of the law, for that is the only name which can suit a disposition which favours one party in society, to the detriment of the other. But as the class of rich persons is far from numerous, all the free men, and even most of the slaves still find means to marry. Those who stated that the commonest Natives in the country have each two or three wives, would have to reckon beforehand, whether the number of women twice or thrice surpassed that of the men; as those who allot seven thousand to a King of Loango, must have ascertained that there is that number in his whole capital; this, no one who has been upon the spot dare assure them.

The fathers and mothers leave to their boys the care of choosing a wife. The marriage of the girls is considered a household affair, which concerns the mother only. The wives bring no portion to their husband; on the contrary, when a boy wants to have a maid in marriage, he goes to find her mother, and makes her those presents which he judges will be most agreeable to her. If these presents, or the band which offers them, do not please the mother, she refuses them. If she accepts them, the young man immediately presents gifts to the maid also, who is still free to receive or reject them. The acceptance of presents on the part of the mother and daughter is equivalent to a promise of marriage. The nuptials, however, are not celebrated until about a month afterwards ; and during that time the girl appears in public, with her body painted red, in order that all the world may know, that the man with whom she is seen to cohabit is her husband. Were not this ceremony previously observed, the marriage would be deemed illegal and sacrilegious and the parents of the girl would have a right to punish her with death. The term prescribed by usage being expired, the girl washes away the red colour with which she has been stained, and the nuptials are celebrated with dances and rustic songs.

Marriage thus contracted, forms an indissoluble bond. There are only certain particular cases excepted by the law, which authorize a husband to divorce his wife; as for instance, when a Princess chooses him for her husband. Conjugal chastity is singularly respected among these people; adultery is placed in the list of the greatest crimes.

By an opinion generally received, the women are persuaded that if they were to render themselves guilty of infidelity, the greatest misfortunes would overwhelm them, unless they averted them by an avowal made to their husbands, and in obtaining their pardon, for the injury they might have done. There are still some more faults of which the wives think themselves bound to accuse themselves to their husbands. This accusation is a sort of religious ceremony. The husband takes care to be always easily to be untreated to pardon his wife for the faults which she avows to him ; but if she names an accomplice, he has a right to prosecute and bring that offender to justice ; and he never fails to do so, especially if the man has carried his "audacity so far as to stain the nuptial couch. When this crime is in agitation, the judge does not require other proofs than the denunciation of the husband, confirmed by the avowal of the wife; because he supposes that this avowal, which condemns her to infamy, cannot but be the cry of conscience. She is acquitted of it at the tribunal of the judge, as she is before her husband, for the sake of her repentance and shame; but it is not so with the seducer; the law ordains that he shall be placed in the power, and at the discretion of the man whom he has outraged; and he becomes his slave, at least unless he be rich enough to ransom himself. It is not to be supposed that such slaves are at all spared by their masters.

A Princess has the double right of choosing from among the people, such a husband as she thinks proper, even if he be already married, and to oblige

him to have her alone for his spouse. As this last condition generally appears too hard to the Princess, it is rare that the Princesses find any of them willing to marry them, even the commoner's dread their alliance; but when it is offered them, they are obliged to accept it, on pain of being constrained by confiscation of body and goods. They have also a liberty, which none of the women of the people have; they can divorce a husband who no longer suits them, and choose another; and it does not appear that they need assign any other motive for their divorce, than their will. In order that the divorced husband of a Princess may marry, or even take back his former wife, if he had one before his marriage with the Princess, he must obtain the permission of the King, who is generally very free and easy on this point.

The small Kingdom of N'Goio acknowledges its dependence on that of Loango, by giving to the King a Princess of the blood, who is not to be the first among his spouses, and has none of the privileges of the other Princesses.

He on whom the Princess fixes her choice to become her husband, begins by rubbing his body with palm oil, and painting himself red: this is the, first exercise of a month's retreat, which he passes altogether at home, without ever stepping outside the door. During this time he feeds on the commonest meat, and drinks only water. At the end of the month he washes himself, and marries the Princess with a great deal of magnificence. But the day of his wedding is the last of his liberty. The husband of a Princess is less her spouse than her slave and her prisoner. He engages himself, in marrying her, never more to look on a woman during the whole time he cohabits with her. Never does he go out, unless accompanied by a numerous escort of part of his guards before, to drive aside all the women on the road where he is to pass. If, in spite of these precautions, a woman meet him on his way, and he has the ill luck to cast his eyes upon her, the Princess, on the deposition of her spies, may have his head chopped off, and she commonly uses this right. This sort of libertinism, sustained by power, often carries the Princesses to the greatest excesses : but nothing is dreaded so much as their anger. Cruelty seems to be their nature, and it might be said, that they wish to revenge themselves on all who approach them, of the sort of servitude to which their sex is condemned.

The condition of other women actually forms a striking contrast with that of the Princesses. While the latter treat their husbands as imperious mistresses; the former are to theirs in a state of dependence bordering on slavery. When they speak to them, it is always kneeling. They alone are charged with the cultivation of the lands, and with all in-door work it is their business to provide for their own subsistence, and that of their children and husband.

If a man has many wives, each in her turn dresses his victuals and holds herself honoured in waiting on him at table, and then in receiving at his hand, the leavings for herself and children. The husband, in order not to,

excite jealousy among his wives, uses no familiarity with any of them. He always dwells alone in his hut, and each of them in hers, with her children. This separation of dwelling does not prevent differences from arising among them now and then, which the husband, according to the usage of the country, has a right to terminate juridically. On the complaint which has been preferred to him, he orders the two rivals to appear together before him; each pleads her cause kneeling; whilst he himself sits on the ground with his feet crossed. After having heard them, he pronounces sentence ; they retire in silence, testifying the most entire submission to his judgment. It appears, that those who have several wives, make some distinction among them; and that some are wives of the first order, others of the second order; of the latter class there are some who are truly slaves. The lot of Princes wives differs much from that of Princesses ; they are not dispensed with in domestic labour, and they are frequently occupied like others in the cultivation of the lands.

The husband commonly is at the charge of giving dresses to his wife, and maintaining her house; he goes a hunting and fishing. When those who have many wives have procured a sufficient quantity of game and fish, they distribute it among all their wives, scrupulously observing, that the shares are equal according to the number of their children. If what they have taken is not sufficient for all, they divide only with her who has charge of the kitchen that day. The commonalty of goods between husbands and wives is not held in this country; it is attended with too many inconveniences for the usage of polygamy. As to successions, the children do not inherit from their father; but only from their mother. The goods of the father are reversible after death to his eldest uterine brother, if he has one. In defect of brothers, to the eldest son of his eldest uterine sister, or lastly, to the eldest son of his nearest maternal relation.

Successions among the poor, that is to say, the bulk of the nation, are reduced to a house, a gun, a sabre, some wooden or earthen vessels, and a few macoutes; sometimes they are of still less value. Those of the rich, of the Princes and Kings, consist of Paves, cotton cloths covered with silver, coral, sabres, guns, and other effects drawn from Europe. As the King is proprietary of the Kingdom, the lands and lordships which the great hold by the title of Government, do not pass to their heirs, unless they purchase the preference, by dint of presents to the King and his Ministers.

CHAP. X. - Of the Education of the Children.

THE fathers take no particular care of the education of their children. They content themselves with inspiring them with a certain vague fear of the Divinity, of which they themselves have very confused notions. They induce them by example, more than discourse, to respect their superstitious

practices ; to avoid lying, theft, and perjury. They also enjoin them to respect the Ganga or Ministers, and the aged. They give them lessons as occasion requires. There is no public school among these people, either for religion, or for sciences ; and there are few trades to which they can bind their children. The young girls are as laborious as their mothers. Always at their side, they share with them the hardest toils of the field, and all the cares of the household. They go to gather fire-wood in the forests, and draw water from the river, which is frequently a quarter of a league distant. But the little boys, following the example of their father, will take no part in the labours with which their sisters are overwhelmed ; and scarcely do they arrive at years of discretion, when they assume the tone of masters over them, as they see their father do over their mother. A missionary one day heard a mother giving a small commission to her son. The child was only about eight years old, but he answered gravely, "Do you think then that I am a boy ?"

Whilst the mother works with her daughters, the boys amuse themselves and idle away their time with children of the same age. They play but little ; sometimes they seek sugar-canes, ananas, and other fruits delicious to the taste ; but their great and almost only occupation, is to go a bird-nesting in the forests, where they find them in great numbers, and of the finest plumage. They also take them in traps and with nets, using ants' eggs for baits. Many children there are among us, who would more easily accustom themselves to this way of life, than to the severities of, study.

When they are come to the age of fifteen or sixteen, they engage voluntarily in fishing ; or they go to the chase as soon as they can find means to purchase a gun. Some of them manufacture macoutes, which are little bits of linen cloth, which pass for money in the country.

CHAP. XI

Of Arts and Trades.

THESE people have no knowledge of writing, nor any signs which may stand in its stead. They have therefore no records but tradition, which is maintained by certain usages. The arts among them are still in their infancy ; they exercise those only which are necessary to life, and even those in a very imperfect manner.

Their physicians are revered as very estimable men, quite essential to the welfare of society : their art forms part of the religion. They bear the name of Ganga, which in the language of the country signifies Minister. When they come to a patient, they ask him where his ailment lies ? and they set to blowing on the part affected ; after that they make formentations, and tie up

his limbs in different places with bandages : these are the preliminaries used in all diseases ; they know nothing either of phlebotomy or of medicines. There are cases in which they employ simples of different sorts, but only, topically. The missionaries could not get to know the Virtues of them. They always chew some before they breathe upon their patients, which operation may well, especially in external hurts, produce some natural effect. The physicians of the country know also a very salutary remedy, in their opinion, for all diseases ; but this they only employ in favour of those who can afford the expense ; when they are called in to a rich man, they take with them all the performers on musical instruments they can find in the country : they all enter in silence ; but at the first signal which they give the musical troop begin their performance some are furnished with stringed instruments ; others beat on the trunks of hollow trees, covered with skin, a sort of tabor. All of them uniting their voices with the sound of the instruments, round the patient's bed, make a terrible uproar and din ; which is often continued for several days and nights in succession. To an European the remedy would be worse than the disease ; but this music, which charms the natives when they are in good health, cannot make them feel, in sickness, a more disagreeable sensation than the most harmonious concert would to one of us ; and in this case the remedy must certainly not be so violent as might at first be imagined. Be that as it may, when the state of the patient begins to grow worse, they endeavour to draw from their instruments the most piercing sounds, and make the whole neighbourhood resound with their cries, as if they wanted to frighten Death and put him to flight. If they do not succeed in this, as it often happens, they console themselves in the thought, that they have done their duty, and that the relations of the defunct have nothing to reproach them with. All the time the choir of musicians remain near the deceased, the physicians pay him frequent visits, and come at stated hours to administer different remedies to him, and to blow upon his pained part.

The most common diseases of these climates are fevers, small-pox, measles, and palsy. The latter is called the King's disease ; the natives regard it as the punishment for some attempt meditated against the King ; the paralytic, however, is never judicially prosecuted, because it is supposed that Heaven, who has deprived him of the use of some of his limbs, has punished him according to the degree of his malicious intention ; but he is regarded as a wicked citizen.

The physicians prescribe no particular regimen to their patients ; they order them to have every thing they want, either to eat or drink, without any regard to quantity or quality ; but if they ask for nothing, nothing is to be offered them. This method is not without its inconveniences, but it may also have its advantages. As soon as the patient is dead, or when he is cured, his relations make a gathering on the spot for the profit of the physician who has attended him during his illness. When the gatherers went to the

missionaries, they generally asked them for European brandy, assuring them, that it was the thing which would most please the Doctor.

As the greater part of our diseases are occasioned by excesses of the table, the natives who always lead an uniform, sober, and frugal life, are rarely sick, and a great number among them, attain an extreme old age. The actual King of Kakongo, named Poukouta, is one hundred and twenty-fix years of age. He has always been in good health, and it was only in the month of March last year, that he felt, for the first time, the infirmities of old age, and that his sight and legs began to weaken ; but his head is still sound, and he habitually employs five or six hours a day, in administering justice to his subjects. The Princess Ma-Inteva, his aunt, is about as old, and in equal health.

When the natives feel themselves indisposed, they make a ptisan of dog's tooth, which is the same as ours. Those who have ailings which do not oblige them to keep their bed, go themselves to the Doctors, who prescribe to them some superstitious practices, to which they attribute the cure, which nature herself operates.

Although these physicians, as we have just now sufficiently shewn, are no great, conjurors, the people believe them to be very deeply versed in the secrets of magic ; and they also do not forbid themselves the acquisition of the occult sciences, which are attributed to them as well as the commerce, supposed to be established between them and the evil spirit whom they undertake to appease. The children of the Doctors succeed their fathers.

The missionaries one day had occasion to see a negro, the lord of a village, whom neither the found of instruments nor the breathings of the doctors, nor even their topical remedies, had been able to cure. His disease bore symptoms quite singular and peculiar ; at the moment when the fit seized him, day or night, he went out and ran at random over the plains and through the forests, making lamentable howlings and cries, like one possessed with a devil. His eyes were haggard and inflamed, he foamed at the mouth, and when he stopped, he appeared shaken with violent convulsions, although he, did harm to no one. The inhabitants of the country, when he was in this state, dreaded to meet him, more than they dreaded a wild beast. When these fits of fury subsided, the man appeared very rational, and spoke sensibly ; but all that the missionaries could draw from him, and what he constantly told every body, was, that he was haunted by a great spectre, the sight of which shook him, and put him beside himself and then he knew not where he was, nor what he did. The missionaries not being able to follow this man, and to examine him in his mad fits, supposed that the disorder was occasioned by organic derangement; though it is not impossible that the demon who already possesses the souls of the wretched inhabitants of these countries, may also sometimes extend his dominion

over the bodies : and that, by a just judgment of God, he begins to punish them, even in this life, for the sacrilegious worship they paid him.

We have spoken elsewhere of agriculture; it is the women who carry it on. They have no other instrument of tillage than a little pointed spade, which is pretty much like the trowels of our masons. They who say they have seen a quantity of vine-dressers in Loango, ought to have seen, that there are no vines in the country.

The men, besides, by an universal prejudice, founded no doubt on their indolence, would think they degraded themselves if they tilled the ground. They prefer to attach honour to more amusing and less toilsome occupations ; almost all of them are hunters

and fishers. A great number are also carpenters, if we may give that name to those who construct such houses as we have described. There are also smiths among them, as well as potters, weavers, and salt-makers.

The smiths get their iron from Europe. To heat it they use charcoal. They hammer it on anvils made of wood harder than stone. There have been seen however, some small iron anvils in the King's forges at Loango. The workmen are slow, and not very skilful ; they make only small ware. The hammers they use are no heavier ,than those of our, upholsterers. Their bellows are of a pretty ingenious make.

The potters make all sorts of earthen vessels, which they bake in the midst of a great fire. They are fashioned almost as well, as those of Europe, although no wheel is used. The potters also make tobacco pipes, the great consumption of which forms a considerable branch of their petty trade.

The weavers make their cloths of a grass about two feet high, which grows untilld in the desert plains, and needs no preparation to be put to work. The length of the grass is the length of the web ; they make it rather narrower than long. This cloth is woven like ours; but they make it on their knees, without shuttle or loom having the patience to pass the wool through the threads with their fingers, in the same way that our basket-makers weave their hurdles. Although they work With such quickness that one can scarcely follow their fingers with ones eyes, they get slowly forward.

The best workmen do not make more than the length of an ell of cloth in the space of eight days.

Their little pieces, which we call macoutes, serve as the current money of the country. The merchants. have no right to refuse in exchange for them the goods they bring to market. Besides the common cloths, the natives make little bags, caps, and other articles some of which would be admired in Europe for the variety of the design, and the delicacy of the workmanship. In the country is found a tree, the inner bark of which is really a cloth, as strong and flexible as ours: the natives use it as macoutes, and as materials for clothes.

The peasants of the villages near the sea, are mostly salters. All their art consists in evaporating sea water over a great fire, which deposits the salt at the bottom of vessels employed for the purpose.

CHAP. XII

Of the mode of Dress, and of some particular Usages.

THESE people have no species of vestment which answers to our shirts ; they are uncovered down to the waist in all seasons; and they go always bare-foot and bare-legged. Their dress consists of a small under, petticoat which we call *pagne*, and which resembles that worn by our bakers 'boys and brewers' apprentices. It reaches half way down the leg some of them, leave a long tail to it. The poor make it of their own country cloth; the rich make it of a cotton cloth, or of other light stuffs brought from Europe. This petticoat is surmounted with a broad girdle, commonly of red or blue cloth, most of them have only one dress, which they wear night and day, until it is too much worn or too dirty, for they never wash their clothes. By a usage very different from ours, the men have always caps on, and the women go bareheaded; they wear their hair, the men shave their heads. The heads of those who aspire to glory in apparel, resemble a *parterre*; you see alleys and figures traced on them with a great deal of symmetry. Allowing for this difference, the women are dressed pretty much like the men ; and the author of the "General History of Asia, Africa, and America", has been ill informed, when he says in Vol. XII. of his work that their petticoats are not surmounted by a girdle like those of the men; it is however remarked, that they have less inclination than the men for glittering ornaments; on feast days, for want of jewellery they attire themselves in rascades ; the rascade is a bead of glass, of which chaplets are made in Europe.

They make collars and bracelets of them, and even put them round their legs : some men envy them this brilliant attire ; but instead of employing the rascade in collars and bracelets, they make a sort of bandolier of it. The men as well as the women and even the children carry in their girdle a sheathed knife; like our head cooks. This knife, which is always well sharpened, serves as a razor for their beard, and as scissors for their poll. A modern historian, ill informed on the usage's of the country, says, that the inhabitants of Loango make their bed posts of the palm tree. If these people used bed posts, they might find in their forests many trees preferable to the palm for this purpose; but their bed is merely a mat for the poor, and an European carpet for the rich ; this does not binder them from sleeping soundly. The most diligent are never up before sunrise, and the greater part not till long afterwards. If they have any work to do, it is commonly done before dinner. They make only two meals; the first at ten o'clock, and the second at nightfall. Although they tire themselves very little in the forenoon, they rest almost the whole afternoon; except when they take a fancy to go hunting or a fishing, we have shown that their most common pastime, is

talk. Many of them play at a game very like our games of draughts and chess; they amuse themselves also at a hand game, which consists in beating, themselves in cadences quicker or slower, in different parts of the body, so as just to meet and strike at the same time each other's hands ; they often gather together in a public place, under the shade of a well-tufted tree, to hold concerts. Each is admitted to play his part; they are less harmonious, but more noisy than ours. They use all sorts of stringed instruments made by themselves in their own way; trumpets, fifes, and drums, comprise also a part of their symphonies ; they always mix their verses with the sounds of their instruments. The more noise is made, the better the piece is performed ; these concerts, which flatter and transport the Africans, also amuse the Europeans, who cannot help laughing at this strange result of an infinity of voices accompanied by hoarse braying instruments of all kinds. If some of our military musicians were to land in these countries, they would become new Orphei, and draw after them the towns and villages ; but the tender and impassioned airs of our best opera musicians would be laughed at.

Although dancing is a fatiguing exercise in such but countries, it is much practiced. It is sometimes a diversion; but oftener a religious ceremony. The Natives dance when they are in sorrow, just as they do when they are joyful; at the funeral of their fathers, as at their own wedding, the song ever accompanies the dance; the most qualified of the troop, or he who can sing best, begins alone, and the others repeat the song, and dance to it as our provincial peasants do. They have no songs composed, they make them offhand; and take their subject from existing circumstances. The missionaries one day heard of a woman, who, dancing on the occasion of her husband's death deplored his lot and that of her children ; she compared the defunct to the roof of a house, the fall of which soon involves that of the whole edifice ; " Alas ! (cried she, in her language,) the ridge has fallen; there lies the building exposed to the weather, all is over; the ruin is unavoidable."

The more remote the natives are from sweetness and nature in their concerts, the more sentiment and truth they throw into their dances and rustic songs. Be they provoked by grief, or excited by joy, they are always the faithful expression of nature.

The hearer is moved with them, in spite of, himself ; especially when he beholds their action. One day, when two missionaries were passing through a village, they heard of a mother whose son some robbers had stolen, and sold as a slave to the Europeans. This woman, in the first transport of woe, sallies from her house dissolved in tears, holding her daughter by the hand; she immediately fell to dancing with her, chaunting, her misfortune in the most piteous and touching tone. Now she cursed the day when she became a mother; then she called her son making, imprecations against the

wretches who had borne him away ; at other times she reproached for their most cruel avarice those European merchants who buy from all hands those who are offered to them as slaves.

Struck by the novelty of the sight, the missionaries flopped a moment : the song of the desolated mother, the abundance of her tears, the irregular movement which agitated her by turns, even the disorder of the dance all rendered the sentiment, all expressed

nature with such energy, that the missionaries themselves, pierced with profound grief, felt their tears flow and retired weeping. The women, like the men, have their assemblies for diversion and dancing: but only on feast days, or when they have finished their toils of the field, and the business of the household. They are never confounded with the men; even the wife does not dance with her husband, nor the sister with her brother.

They never work above three days in succession; the fourth is for them a general rest day, during which they are not allowed to busy themselves in tillage. The men, who repose habitually, work still less on that day. They walk, sport, and go to market. The missionaries have never been able to procure from the natives any explanation of this period of four days, which forms their week. They know neither months nor years.

When they reckon time, which they rarely do, it is by moons and seasons; thus to make them understand that our Lord offered himself for the salvation, of men at thirty three years of age, we tell them that he was sixty-six seasons old.

It was matter of surprise to see people who count nothing, not even their age, should have like us the use of numbers, which they carry even to infinity. They begin by numerating like us, one, two, three, &c. &c. as far as ten: instead of saying ten, they say tithing, and they continue tithing one, tithing two, tithing three, up to twenty : then they say two tithings, next two tithings one, two tithings two, two tithings three, &c. they numerate them as far as nine tithings nine ; then they say a hundred, and begin again; when they come to ten hundreds, they employ a term which answers to a thousand ; and they thus continue to numerate as far as millions and milliards. Numbers are sometimes matters of entertainment to the sages of the country.

It is commonly at nightfall that the natives make their second repast; it is not more splendid than the first. In the evening they light torches, which are of the size of those which our lacquers carry behind carriages; they are made of an odoriferous gum, which distils plentifully from one of the forest trees, and which petrifies in rollers. Instead of putting their wick in the torch, they put the torch into the wick, by investing the rollers with flax and bits of dry wood. These torches throw up a light smoke, which spreads an agreeable odour to a great distance. Although the nights are never cold,

they commonly light a fire in the evening to purify the air, which by the continual exhalations from the earth, is rendered thick and unwholesome. Their hearth, when no rain falls, is in the middle of the court. That is also the place where they take their evening repast. Immediately after supper they retire to their huts, and lie down on their mats unless some neighbour comes to talk, or they have to dance in honour of a dead person, which very often happens; because they are accustomed, as we shall see in the sequel to dance for several months for their nearest relatives, and in proportion for others, and each for their friends. On these occasions they watch the greater part of the night, and sleep by day.

CHAP. XIII - Of the Government.

THE government with these people is purely despotic. They say their lives and goods belong to the King; that he may dispose of and deprive them of them when he pleases without form of process, and without their paying any thing to complain of.

In his presence they pay marks of respect which resemble adoration. The individuals of the lower classes are persuaded that his power is not confined to the earth, and that he has credit enough to make rain fall from heaven: hence they fail not, when a continuance of drought makes them fearful about the harvest, to represent to him that if he does not take care to water the lands of his kingdom, they will die of hunger, and will find it impossible to make him the usual presents.

The King, to satisfy the people, without however compromising himself with heaven, devolves the affair on one of his ministers, to whom he gives orders to cause to fall without delay upon the plains as much rain as is wanted to fertilize them. When the minister sees a cloud which he presumes must shed rain, he shows himself in public, as if to exercise the orders of his Prince. The women and children troop around him, crying with all their might Give us rain, give us rain : and he promises them some.

The King, who reigns as a despot over the people, is often disturbed in the exercise of his power, by the princes his vassals, many of whom are not much inferior to him in force. These princes voluntarily acknowledge their dependence so long as the King exacts nothing from them which impairs their privileges or pretensions; but should the Sovereign authority seem inclined to constrain them, they endeavour to withdraw themselves from it by open force and by dint of arms.

The slaves are not the most ill-treated persons in these states: the King and the princes spare those who belong to them, under the apprehension, lest, having nothing which attaches them to their native soil, they should pass

into the service of foreign Princes, who always very willingly seize the opportunity of augmenting their possessions, by assuring to fugitive slaves who are willing to surrender themselves to them, the same lot and condition in life which they have left. The free natives are more to be pitied, with respect to their condition. They are obliged to make presents to the king, in proportion to the number of their slaves, of the lands they till, and the cattle they breed. If the king thinks they do not give enough, he sends slaves to their places to take what they have. Just and humane kings do not permit themselves to make these cruel exaction's; but their Ministers, the governors of provinces, and other subaltern officers, often execute them in their name. The people suffer without complaining, being persuaded that the King in despoiling them, only exercises his right, and console themselves with the thought in that they shall always find a few roots of manive to subsist upon.

This form of administration, as it may be easily imagined, stifles the very germ of emulation; the arts do not improve, every thing languishes. Even supposing the king to be sole proprietary of the whole kingdom, if his subjects by paying him a fixed tax, in proportion to the lands they could till, might promise themselves, like the farmers of our lords, to gather in quietness the fruits of their labours and their industry ; their rich plains which are now abandoned would be tilled with care, or covered with cattle ; the Prince would be the richer for it, and the people would live in a state of enjoyment. But, contented with a small field which yields, them a few insipid roots, and the tillage of which they leave to the females, they pass their lives in idleness, despising the riches, of which the king when he pleases, may say, "they are mine".

Though the kings do not employ the most proper means for promoting the welfare of their subjects, they hold this as a principle, that it is their interest as well as their duty, to occupy themselves with the care of rendering them happy, and maintaining peace and justice among them. Every day they pass several hours in deciding the processes. of those who have appealed with them to their tribunals; they hold frequent Councils; but it is rare that they have a real friend, and a disinterested man among those whom they invite thither. The ministers stand charged with the execution of whatever has been determined in the king's council; but as this prince blindly defers to them, it frequently happens, that, while occupied with the details of justice, he pacifies the differences of a few families, one of his ministers, in his name, though without his knowledge, spreads trouble and desolation over a whole province.

The principal ministers are the Ma-Ngovo, the Ma-Npontou, the Ma-Kaka, the M-Fouka, and the Ma-Komba. The Ma-Ngovo, whom we call Mangovo, is the Minister for Foreign affairs, and the introducer of foreigners at court. The Ma-Npontou is associated to the department of the Mangovo, and represents

him when absent. The Ma-Kaka is minister of war, and even generalissimo of the armies. It is he who causes the troops to be mustered in time of war, who appoints their officers, reviews them, and also leads them to battle. The M-Fouka, whom the French call Mafouque, is minister of commerce. He makes frequent voyages on the Sea coasts, where are the warehouses and factories of the Europeans. He is obliged, by the nature of his office, to make frequent representations of the State of the exchanges which are made between the Europeans and the Africans, and to take care that no frauds are committed on either side. He also presides over the recovery of the droits which the king exacts from strangers who trade in his states; and he is charged with the general police of the markets. The Ma-Kimba is Grand Master of the waters and forests. It is he who has the inspection of all the boatmen, fishermen, and hunters; and it is to him that the fish and game intended for the King are directed. They reckon also in the number of ministers a Ma-Nibanza, a Main-Bile, and some others whose functions are unknown.

These ministers have no offices or houses of business as ours have ; they even know not how either to read or write: with the exception of a small number of important affairs, they dispatch all others on the spot, and as soon as they present themselves, in order not to run the risk of forgetting them. Their clerks are intelligent slaves whom they send into the towns and provinces, to signify to private individuals, as well as persons in place, the king's intentions. In all the provinces and in all the towns, there is a Governor for the King. The Chiefs of the, villages are also king's officers; they administer justice in his name. They are the more exact in requiring that every one shall make presents proportioned to his revenues, inasmuch as they themselves are charged with the receipt and transmission of them to court. The peasants are frequently obliged to compound with them, and to make them particular presents in order to ransom themselves from the vexations which those officers are disposed to inflict in the name of the King. He, for example, who has four goats, in order not to be constrained to give three of them to the King, or even to give up the whole four, begins by making a present of the finest among them to the Chief of the village, who will then content himself with a second for the King. The King alone nominates persons to all state offices, and he does it in council. There is no examination as to who might be the subjects most worthy of holding them, but who are they who offer most for them. The lucrative governments are usually adjudged to the relatives of the ministers, or to the ministers themselves. The day on which the, King has nominated a person to an important place, is always a feast day in the capital. The province also, in which the officer is to exercise his charge, makes great rejoicing when he arrives to take possession of it: and the poor people, who when they are suffering always expect that a change must be for the better, run singing and dancing before him who has just bought, at the highest price, the right of despoiling them with impunity, and on behalf of the King.

CHAP. XIV. - Of the Princes and the Rights of The Crown.

The crown among these people is not hereditary, as several authors aver, who in this point as well as in an infinite number of others, merely copy each other's errors.

There is in each kingdom a family, or if you please a class of Princes, for they are very numerous, and they know not the order of their genealogy so correctly as to know if they be of a common origin. It is sufficient to be Prince in order to have the right of pretending to the crown: and it must necessarily be so, in order to possess certain noble fiefs which are held more immediately on that tenure.

No nobles are known in these countries, except the Princes, and nobility does not descend except by the females, so that all the children of a Princess-mother are Princes or Princesses, though begotten by a plebeian father; as, on the other hand, the children of a Prince, or even those of a King, are not nobles, unless their father has married a Princess, which scarcely ever happens, because the Princesses, as we have already remarked, have the privilege of obliging their husbands to have only a single wife, and because the Princes and the Kings generally prefer marrying plebeian females, and seeing their nobility terminate with them, to renouncing the rights of polygamy.

On the death of every King there is always an interregnum, during which are celebrated the obsequies of the defunct, who is commonly interred after the lapse of some years. The Kingdom, is then governed by a Regent, who takes the title of Ma-Boman, that is to say, Lord of terror, because he has the right of making himself feared throughout the whole Kingdom. It is the King who in his lifetime nominates the Ma-Boman: the law itself, in order to prevent the inconveniences of anarchy, obliges him to designate two of them, the second of whom, in case the first dies, is charged with the affairs of state until they have proceeded to the election of a new King, It is during this interregnum, that the pretenders to the crown, from their canvass and by means of presents and promises, try to render the electors favourable to themselves.

These electors are the Princes, the Ministers, and the Regent. The actual King of Loango was not elected till after an interregnum of seven years, and his predecessor, who died in 1766, is not yet buried; this delay was occasioned by a contest which arose between the citizens of Loango, who pretend that the Prince ought to be interred in his capital; and those of Loanguilli, the usual burial place of the Kings, who will not cede their privilege. However, as the difference was not made up, and the time determined by usage for the interment of the King had expired several years before, it was thought that the election of his successor might be proceeded in, and he has now occupied the throne four years.

In certain Kingdoms the Prince himself designates his successor but all the Sovereigns have not this right; it is contested against the Kings of Loango and N'Goyo. The King designates his successor by putting him in possession of a fief which cannot be possessed except by him who is to succeed to the crown. This fief is called Kaia, and the Prince to whom the King gives the investiture of it, quits all other titles to assume that of Ma-Kaia. From the day on which the Ma-Kaia has taken possession of his lordship, entrance into the capital is forbidden him, until the King be dead and buried. The King, either in order not to remove to a distance from his person him whom he loves well enough to make his successors or to bind all the princes strictly attached to his interest, by letting each of them enjoy his hope of having the choice fixed on him, defers as long as he can the having a Ma-kaia proclaimed. It even happens sometimes that not being able to resolve, on creating a number of mal-contented by preference of one, he dies without having nominated his successor. It is but a few years since the King of Loango, now very old, declared his. Though according to the laws of certain States the right of the Ma-Kaia to the crown be incontestible, as it has not been conferred but by the choice of one man, it is never respected so much as that would be, which should be founded on the order of truth ; and after a powerful prince, jealous of a preference with which he perhaps had flattered himself, raises a part of the kingdom in revolt, and declares war on the new King. No one doubts, in the Kingdom of Kakongo, that after the death of the actual King the crown may be disputed against the Ma-kaia by, the Ma-nboukou, or Prince who is below him in dignity, but surpasses him in power, and neglects nothing to conciliate the favour of the people.

It is here rather than any where else, that every one is enabled to feel how advantageous it is for a State, that the Sovereign authority should be perpetuated in the same family by an invariable order and succession ; and if those pretended sages, who pass themselves for protectors of mankind in matters of government as well as of religion, had gone through a course of politics in these countries in the school of experience, they would doubtless not be seen to attack with their pens a form of government the most wisely established for ensuring the happiness and tranquillity of the people; and they would be forced to agree that hereditary sovereignty with all its inconveniences, a necessary consequence of all human establishments, has inestimable advantages over an elective form of government. In fact when a King dies without having designated his successor and in Kingdoms where he has no right to designate one, it is as it were become customary to celebrate his obsequies by battles, and for the country to become the theatre of civil war, such results are expected and prepared for. This happened very lately in the little Kingdom of N'Goyo : The Prince who was elected King had to sustain his election with arms in hand, against the Ma-ntoakou of the same Kingdom. The latter, finding himself too weak to maintain a campaign against the Royal Army with his own forces alone, contracted an alliance with the Count of Logno, a powerful Prince, feudatory at Congo, the States of which border on the Kingdom of N'Goyo.

The Count gathered his troops together, led them in person to the Ma-nboukou, who by the help of these succours law, himself in a condition to seek out his enemy, before whom he was flying previously. The armies met, and battle was given, the King's troops were defeated; he himself made prisoner, and the Ma-nboukou, who felt no horror at confirming the crime of rebellion by a still greater crime, had his Sovereign's head chopped off. Deeming himself in peaceable possession of the Kingdom he had just usurped, he wanted to dismiss the army of his allies but this war what the Count of Logno did not understand, and assuming a tone of authority with the pretended King, told him that every body knew he held the crown by incontestable rights; that if he would himself acknowledge them, he would treat him as a friend ; but if he pretended to dispute them with him, he knew how to avail himself of the arms in his hand. In fact, the war was renewed, and lasted several years, during which the trade of the Europeans was interrupted on those coasts ; it has just been terminated, but no one yet knows whether by a treaty of peace, or by the death of one or both of the combatants.

CHAP. XV. - Of the Laws, and the manner in which Justice is administered.

THERE are few laws among these people, and they are not written. These are preserved by usage and tradition ; there is no one ignorant of the cases which incur pain of death, and of those for which the offender becomes the slave of the person offended ; murder and poisoning are punished with death, and confiscation of a part of the culprits goods to the profit of the heirs of the deceased. It is very rare that a native openly attempts the life of another : but the Europeans, according to an old prejudice, believe that many die among them by poison; and they themselves, through an excess of simplicity believing their nation capable of hurrying into atrocities which are by no means characteristic of it, do not fail to attribute to poison all sudden deaths, and those which are preceded by certain violent diseases. The relatives of the deceased on these occasions consult divines and sorcerers, and know whom they are to come upon ; but it is enough to dwell awhile in the country in order to perceive that they slander themselves, and that these vague suspicions of poison or malefactions, the pretended authors of which are never convicted, are with them, as with all credulous people in, our country places, the pure effect of ignorance, and the chimera of a clouded imagination.

Robbery is not punished with death ; but he who is taken in the act of stealing, even things of the smallest value, is condemned to become the slave of the person he has robbed, unless he can make it up with him, by furnishing him with a slave in kind or in value. The faint penalty lies against any one who shall insult a Prince, or a Minister, even by words. We have seen that he who was convicted of adultery, was given up as a slave to the

offended party. Only the Princesses have the right of insisting on the punishment of death for the faithlessness of their husbands.

All the ordinances of the King are arbitrary, and commonly bear the stamp of the most absolute despotism. It is a maxim generally adopted by Sovereigns, and regarded as a cardinal point of their policy, that the multitude may be restrained by severe rules ; but each makes an application of this principle with more or less discretion, according to his humanity, his sense or his council. By an ill judged zeal with regard to order and policy, Princes, otherwise well, intentioned, sometimes proscribe as crimes and on pain of death abuses which would disappear on the menace of the slightest punishment. The missionaries, on their arrival at Kakongo, having been troubled for several days in succession by some individuals who affected to sing and cry around their dwelling, carried their complaints to the King, when they had occasion to go and see him; he promised them that he would restore order; in fact, they were very much surprised on the same day to hear proclaimed an ordinance, denouncing pain of death on all persons, of whatever age or condition, they might be, who should dare in future to disturb the repose of the missionaries. The first time they went to salute the Prince he asked them, if any one had since molested them, and he told them, the first man denounced should lose his head. The reason they assign for this severity in punishing slight faults with the same vigour as the greatest is, that the easier it is to abstain from the thing forbidden, or to do what is ordained, the less executable is the disobedience; and the more of course does it deserve to be severely punished.

When the King is inclined to pass a law, he assembles his ministers and principal officers, and after having taken their advice, he declares his final will, which they cause to be known immediately by the governors of the provinces. The latter publish the law, by a herald, in all the markets which they hold in all the towns and villages of their government ; and they are charged jointly with the governors of the towns to see it duly executed, It is also in council that the King appoints persons to vacant charges and offices fixes the price of goods, and regulates all that concerns trade and police.

The governors of the towns and the chiefs of villages are at the same time judges civil and criminal. They have a right of sentencing to slavery and even to death; but it is open to every one to appeal from their sentence to the tribunal of the governor general of the province, and in the last resort to the King himself.

The room where the King gives his audiences and administers justice, is a sort of Hall ; he is seated on the ground upon a carpet, having round him several assessors whom he consults on difficult cases. There are always seen a great number of natives at his audiences. Some attend from curiosity, others from the interest they take, in the affairs that are to be decided. When the King is ready to hear the parties, he orders the officers to confront them in his presence; often in this country they do not plead by counsel,

unless in case of sickness, when one of the nearest relatives takes charge of the affair. The pleaders in appearing before the judge always begin by making him a small present. The party pretending to be lesed, speaks first, and as long as he pleases. The women plead their causes themselves, like the men. One party never interrupts the adverse party; he waits till the other has done, in order to repel falsehoods and bad faith. If the facts be contested, and there be witnesses, the King orders them to make deposition of what they know ; if there be no witnesses, and the affair be of some importance, as those generally are in which appeal is made to the King, the decision is deferred until ampler information is brought; then the ministers charge certain intelligent Natives whose employ pretty nearly answers to that of our police spies, to discover the truth. They repair to the places where the people of the country talk; and some times address the parties themselves and try to insinuate themselves into their confidence, in order to worm out the secret. They rarely return without having the information necessary to serve as foundation for judgment.

When any one is accused of a crime of which they cannot convict him, they permit him to justify himself by drinking the Kassa.

The Kassa is prepared by infusing in water a bit of wood so called. This potion is a true poison to weak stomachs, which have not strength to throw it up immediately. He who stands the proof is declared innocent, and his accuser is condemned as a slanderer. If the fault of which the pretended culprit is accused does not deserve death, as soon as they perceive, him just ready to expire they make him take an antidote, which excites vomiting and brings him back to life ; but they condemn him as a culprit to the penalty fixed by law.

The inhabitants of the country have the greatest faith in this cordial. The Princes and lords sometimes cause kassa to be taken in order to clear up their suspicions, but they must first obtain the King's permission to do so, which is not difficult when the suspicions are of weighty concern.

About two years ago, a Prince of the Kingdom, of Kakongo, who suspected that a design had been entertained of poisoning him, caused all the people of his household to take kassa ; a great number of them died, and among others, a man of his officers whom he most loved, and who passed in the country for the honesties man in his service.

If the accused does not appear to answer him who prefers a complaint against him, the King sends servants to seek him who, are at once tipstaves, sergeants, bailiffs, marshal men. Those who have to dread being condemned to death try to quit the Kingdom, and take refuge with some foreign prince, who receives them among his slaves.

There are no public prisons. When the King thinks fit to superintend the execution, of any criminals, they are held by the neck to a piece of forked

wood, eight or ten feet long, and too heavy for them to bear up in their hands, so that they remain captives in the open plain. It has been sometimes seen that not being able to walk forward because the, piece of wood cut their breath, they tried to drag themselves backwards : but no one ran after them, because it is well known they could not go very far. These vagabond prisoners have no other nourishment than that which is, given them through compassion. No one thinks of delivering them ; he who did so, would be put in their, place, if discovered.

As there are few laws in this country, the science of jurisprudence is not, properly speaking, any thing but the knowledge of the human heart, which is acquired by experience. The causes moreover, being, never distorted by the subtleties of chicanery ; let but the Kings apply themselves ; and the necessity they are under of terminating every day of themselves the differences of their subjects, puts them, in a, way to judge with wisdom and equity. When the King has pronounced sentence the parties retire, testifying by exterior marks of respect, that they abide by his judgment. The governors of the provinces, towns and villages, follow the same method as the King, in the administration of justice.

CHAP. XVI. On some, particular usages of the Kings of Kakongo.

BY an usage of which the inhabitants are equally ignorant of the origin and the end and which they regard as holding essentially to the constitution of their monarchy, the Kings of Kakongo cannot possess or even touch the different sorts of merchandise which come from Europe, except metals, arms, and articles made of wood and ivory. The Europeans and the Africans who are clothed in European stuffs are not admitted into their, palaces. (The King of Kakongo is permitted to receive European goods in his palace, provided he do not touch them. They who wear clothes made of foreign stuff take great care to keep at a certain distance from his person, for fear of touching him. He drinks to the sound of, a little bell in the Audience Hall. I stated the present King to be 126 years of age: he is turned 128. A gentleman, M. De Foligny, captain of a vessel of Nantes, who saw him last year, and hunted with him, assures me, that his age was known to all the vessel navigators who frequent the coast of Loango.) It is to be presumed that the first legislator of the nation must have imposed this law on the Sovereigns in order to retard the progress of luxury, and attach the people by the example of their masters to do without any thing from foreigners, and seek supplies for their wants in their own industry. But as the law binds the King, alone, he is the only one who observes it. All the subjects, even his ministers, traffic indiscriminately in all kinds of goods that are brought them; they make use of the victuals and liquors of Europe and those who are, clad in foreign stuffs are exonerated from the offence by changing their dresses when they go to the, King's houses.

This Prince eats in one room, and goes to drink in another: he eats in private, and drinks in public : his common beverage is palm-wine. The hall where he drinks is closed only on three sides, and is pretty much like a great coach-house. There is always a great number of Natives who assist in the ceremony of the King's drinking that is the time they choose for paying court to him When the king appears, every body places himself in, the most respectful attitude; his cup-bearer gives him drink in a vessel of the country make; and at the same time a ganga, who is at once his physician, his sorcerer, and his major-domo, begins to ring a little bell, crying with all his might *Tina foua, tina foua, prostrate your selves or begone*. Then all present, except the ganga, fall flat with their faces on the ground. They think the king would die if any of his subjects were to see him drink. When he has drunk the ganga leaves off ringing and crying; every one rises, clapping his hands, and the king goes to finish his dinner.

By an usage equally singular the King of Kakongo is obliged to drink a draught at every cause which he decides; and sometimes he decides fifty at a fitting; but palm wine is merely a refreshing liquor. If he were not to drink the sentence would not be legal. They then observe the same ceremonial as when he drinks during his repasts, He holds his audience daily from sunrise, that is to say, about six o'clock, until there are no more causes to try. He is very rarely at liberty before eleven in the forenoon.

The now reigning King is generally beloved and esteemed by his subjects, for his patience in hearing and his wisdom in judging. His age (one hundred and twenty-six years) which gives him the superiority of experience over all the judges in this kingdom, has not weakened the vigour of his mind.

When the King falls sick the first care of his physicians is to publish the intelligence in all the provinces of his Kingdom. At this news every one is obliged to kill a cock nobody knows why. The most sensible among them laugh at this foolery, and say that the dead cock does more good to them, than to the King, because they eat it. But they raise a great outcry against a usage equally whimsical and more hurtful to society; it is, not to till the ground throughout the whole extent of the Kingdom for several months from the date of the King's death, and during a similar space of time in the province where a Prince or a Princess has died. The missionaries one day heard some Natives laying to each other, "We must surely be very mad to submit to such ridiculous usages. How! because the King is dead of sickness, shall all his subjects expose themselves to die of hunger Yet gage and superstition prevail over reason.

CHAP. XVII - Of the Trade

THE principal trade of these people is that in slaves, whom they sell to the Europeans that is to say, to the French, the English, and the Dutch, who transport them to their American Colonies. The slaves taken from Loango

and other neighboring Kingdoms, pass for the blackest and most robust in Africa. They are taken in war by those who sell them. In the interior of the territory there are hostile people irreconcilable to those of whom we are speaking. The latter say they are cruel and ferocious, that they drink human blood, and eat as many victims as they can take. It is by way of reprisals that they themselves wage open war on them, and they pretend that they, treat them humanely, contenting themselves with felling them to the Europeans at *the* fame time when they have a right to deprive them of life. This war, though continual, does not however trouble the tranquility of the Kingdom, because it is carried on far beyond the frontiers by certain individuals, and, properly speaking, it is less a war than a chase; but one in which the hunter is often liable to become the prey of the game he follows.

Those who have made captives fell them to merchants of the country, or bring them to the coasts "but they are not allowed themselves to fell them to the Europeans: they are obliged to address themselves to brokers, nominated by the minister of commerce, who treat with the captains of ships. These slaves are estimated according to their age, sex, and strength they pay for them in European goods.

Though the different Kingdoms of which we are speaking be not far distant from each other; the manner of valuing goods and turning slaves to account is not uniform among them. On the coasts of Malimha and Cabinda, that is to Say, in the Kingdoms of Kakongo and N'Goyo, they reckon by goods; and in Loango by pieces; what they call *goods*, is a piece of cotton or Indian cloth ten or fourteen ells long. The Natives before striking a bargain go and mark off at the captain's store, which is on the sea side, the pieces of Ruffs they choose to take; and he who has fold four slaves at fifteen *goods* a head, goes to receive sixty pieces of the stuffs marked off. In the Kingdoms where they buy by goods *it* is customary to give for each slave what is called *the over and above*, which commonly consists of three or four guns and as many swords; fifteen pots of brandy, fifteen pounds of gunpowder, and some dozens of knives. If these articles be not always given them, others are substituted as an equivalent.

At Loango they reckon by pieces, and every fort of goods is entered in a line of the account with the stuffs to form the piece; thus, when they say a slave costs thirty pieces, it does not mean he costs thirty pieces of stuffs, but thirty times the ideal value Which they think fit to fix on, and call *apiece*; so that a single piece of stuff is sometimes estimated at two or three *pieces*, as sometimes several objects must form a single piece. This difference in the manner of reckoning is nothing at bottom, and the price of slaves is nearly the fame in all the Kingdoms bordering on Loango.

It is possible by inspecting the following account to estimate the real value of the piece, and to see what are the goods which commonly pass among the Africans in exchange for slaves.

I have paid to the Ma-Nboukou, for the slave Makviota, twenty-two years of age, whom he has sold me at thirty pieces,

An indienne of fourteen ells valued at two and a half pieces

2 ½

Two guineas (they are cotton cloths dyed deep blue) each valued at two and a half pieces

5

A chaffelat (white grape), and a bajutapeau (hog's cheek). fourteen ells each (they are cotton cloths), estimated at four pieces

4

A neganopeau of 14 ells and a great nicane of 9 ½ ells (other cotton cloths), estimated at three and a half pieces

3½

A piece of handkerchiefs of 9 ells, estimated at a piece and a half

1½

A rod (about an ell and a quarter of thick woollen stuff) estimated at a piece .

1

A girdle of red cloth (an ell long by one foot broad) estimated at a piece

1

Two common guns, valued at two pieces

2

Two barrels of gunpowder (about 5lbs. each) valued at two pieces

2

Two bags of leaden musket balls, (weight 3lbs. each) valued at half a piece

0½

Two swords, valued at each a quarter of a piece

0½

Two dozens of common sheath knives, estimated at half a piece

0½

Two bars of iron (weight both together 20lb.) valued at a piece

1

Five pots of Dutch ware, valued at half a piece

0½

Four barrels of brandy, each containing five pots, valued at four Pieces

4

Ten strings of bugles (glass beads, of which chaplets are made) valued at half a piece

0½

Total - 30 Pieces

I have paid moreover to the broker for his trouble the value of six pieces in guns, powder,

swords, and brandy

6 pieces
General total 36 pieces

Besides the pieces determined, on for each slave, the captain must also, ere the bargain be closed, make a present to the Mafouka and the brokers who have served him best, and whom he is very glad to attach to himself: these presents are made in coral, services of plate, carpets, and other movables, more or less precious.

Slaves are at present much dearer than formerly, at least to the French; for they may be dear with respect to one nation and not to another; the French, English and Dutch alike make their exchanges with goods, but these goods differ; so that the dearth of slaves to one nation depends on the price which the herself puts on the goods she carries to the Natives, and this price, as it may be imagined, must vary by reason of the better or worse understanding which reigns among individuals engaged in the same commerce. It would be easy for them not to pay for slaves more than their just value, or even below it, if it were moreover allowable to exercise monopoly and be more unjust towards the barbarian and the stranger than to the citizen, but through want of good understanding among the captains the reverse always takes place; the slaves are bought as it were by auction, and at more than their value. A reasonable price however is sometimes fixed, which they agree not to exceed in their purchases; but even then, every one for himself, desiring to make a ready bargain, renders this convention illusory, by a tacit agreement with the brokers, to pay them in secret a higher price for him whom they have publicly bargained for, to save appearances. The matter at present has come to this pitch, that the Natives are themselves afraid lest the French should in the end make up their minds to renounce a commerce which becomes daily more and more expensive to them.

An old Mafouka one day came to see a missionary respecting this subject, and imagining that the king of France was to be treated with in the same way as the King of Kakongo, and that a missionary could indiscriminately preside over commerce or announce the gospel; thou must, says he, "write to the king of France, and advise him, for his own advantage. and ours, to, establish thee here to see that the captains of ships do not buy any more of our slaves below the reasonable price, for we see very well, that after having bought them of us too dear they will finish by buying no more of us at all."

The function of the brokers is not limited to facilitating the slave trade; they are also charged with superintending the execution of the regulations established by the King or the Mafouka, the most important of which is, that there shall not be sold any slaves to the Europeans except those which have been taken in war or purchased from abroad.

Every slave born in the Kingdom is under the protection of the Mafouka, and may appeal against his master, should he be inclined to sell him to the Europeans unless he have given him that right through his own misconduct; for the law authorizes a master to rid himself of a slave, who may have been guilty of bad faith, rebellion, or any other crime. The Mafouka of Kakongo, to prevent the violences and frauds which might be exercised in this trade, has issued prohibitions against the brokers from trafficking in slaves during the night time, or even from introducing, them into the stores of the Europeans, under pretext of showing them to the captains. They are equally forbidden to receive, without an express permission, advance or earnest for the price of the slaves who have not as yet been delivered up.

(The prohibition made by the Mafouka of Kakongo to the brokers, against receiving advances on the price of the slaves they had to deliver, is habitually transgressed under the very eye of that minister).

The slave trade is the only one which the French carry on, upon these coasts of ivory, that in monkeys, parrots, and some other merchandise of that *kind, forms an object* of so little, importance that they reckon nothing of it. The English obtain yearly from the forest of Jomba several ships cargoes of a very good red wood for dying, though of an inferior quality, to that of Brazil. The trade carried on upon the coasts With foreigners, interests, as I have just observed, only the small number of individuals who may be regarded as the rich and mighty ones of the country. As to the people; knowing no need, but that of food and clothing in the grossest and simplest manner, they confine their traffic to a very few things; there is a market daily in all the towns and great villages, it is held in the public place under the shade of some thick trees. They sell smoke-dried fish, manioc and other roots, salt, palm-nuts, sugarcanes, bananas, fig bananas, and some other fruits. It is on feast days that the greatest afflux of buyers and sellers is seen. No fraud is known in the market; a mother sends thither a child six years old, convinced that they will not deceive him. It is not necessary to understand the language in order to buy, no one ever cheapens or bargains; all goods are divided equally in small portions of the standard weight, and each portion is worth a macouta. There is not much greater risk of being cheated in the quality than in the quantity; one persons salt and manioc is worth the salt and manioc of another. Thus, without taking the trouble of comparing one dealer's goods with those of another, they take from the first they find as many small packets as they have macoutas to give, and make room for others.

CHAP XVIII - Of Wars

In these countries where the crown is elective, the death of the Kings, according to a remark already made, is as it were the signal of a civil war. A Prince who, ambitious enough to direct his views to the throne, has no reason to count on the favour of the electors, makes his vassals take up

arms to force their suffrages, or to dispute the crown with him whom they may have preferred. If he fears that his party may not be the strongest, he addresses himself to a foreign Prince, who, for a few pieces of European stuffs, or vessels of silver, sends him a whole army.

The reciprocal pretensions of the sovereigns to certain provinces, or even on the states bordering on theirs, are the common pretext of all wars between people of different Kingdoms. All these Kings have their chimaera in this respect, which they realize when a favourable opportunity offers; it is thus that the count of Sagos has just availed himself of his pretensions to the Kingdom of N'Goyo. The King of Congo claims the Kingdom of Kakongo as a province of his states; and the King of Kakongo, doubtless by way of reprisals, never calls himself any other title than Ma-Congo, king of Congo, instead of Ma-Kakongo King of Kakongo, a title given him by foreigners, and the only one that suits him. These pretensions are not always unfounded; many small Kingdoms or Sovereign States, which at the present day share Africa among them, were originally provinces dependent on other Kingdoms, the particular governors of which usurped the sovereignty. It is not a long time since the Sogno ceased to be a province of the Kingdom of Congo.

The sovereigns of these countries maintain no regular troops. When a King has determined on war, his Makaka, minister of war and generalissimo of his armies, transmits orders to the Princes and governors of provinces, to levy troops; the latter never fail to load to the rendezvous the quota demanded of them. If the Makaka in the review he makes of his armies thinks it does not cover a sufficient space of ground, he has only to say a word in the King's name and in a few days he finds it more numerous by half. Among these people, as among the ancient Romans, every citizen in a state to bear arms is a soldier of need; but a very bad soldiers.

They who march on some military expedition never fail to paint their whole bodies red, confident that this colour will render them invulnerable to fire arms; part of them wear panache's, even greater and richer in colours than those with which our ladies of the great world adorn themselves at the present day; but they regard them less as ornaments than as scarecrows to inspire their foes with dread. Many are also persuaded that certain feathers of certain birds arranged in a certain guide on their caps have the virtue of putting danger aside, and placing their head in safety. All take with them victuals for a few days, and what arms they can procure, for they have none furnished them. These troops advance on either part without order and without discipline; and the chiefs who command them seem rather to perform, the function of shepherds or herdsmen than that of generals of armies. If a meeting take place they fall to directly, and each, regardless of rank, inattentive to order, goes right upon the enemy he has in his head; the battle always begins with disorder and confusion, soon ending by a general rout or a complete, victory. All depends on the first shock, the party that sustains it with most vigour cannot fail to remain master of the field of

battle. The combats are neither bloody nor obstinate the action is scarce commenced cry fright seizes one or both armies. To determine on a general flight, there only needs that of some soldiers who have seen a comrade of theirs fall by their sides, in an instant all is dissipated and the whole is disbanding. Then the victors pursue the vanquished, sticking to no, employs but that of making prisoners, whom they sell as slaves to the Europeans.

But it is, very rare that the armies advance thus to encounter each other with the intention of coming to blows. The great art of making war is to avoid an enemy and to pounce on the villages known to be abandoned, in order to pillage them, reduce them to ashes, and take some prisoners there. So that no resistance be found, they advance fiercely, burn and sack every thing, and often both armies are despoiling, each on their side, at once, on the hostile territories. They then return, always avoiding an encounter except in case a favourable opportunity occurs for making prisoners. If the Makaka hears that a hostile party is to pass along a wood, or through some defile, he puts a much stronger body in ambush, which bounces suddenly upon it, surrounds it, and masters it without fighting.

The armies in general do not make long campaigns, a war is sometimes over in less than eight days. When the soldiers have eaten the provisions they brought with them, and find none in the hostile country, or when they want powder and lead, nothing can hold them; all, without asking leave, take the road home; and if the King is not satisfied with this expedition, it rests only with him to prepare another, which terminates by desolating the country, without however occasioning any more bloodshed. The Kings sometimes make war in person; but if they be taken, they have no mercy to expect. Their heads are chopped off on the field of battle; a piece of cruelty which always implies weakness in him who performs it, a dastardly and timid foul which fears to repent in future of having been generous to an enemy who had fallen into its power.

It is less by their strength as we see, than by their respective weakness that these different states maintain themselves; and because the soldiers of one Kingdom are neither braver nor better commanded than those of another. Two hundred men of our troops. would conquer as much of the country as they could run over; but after triumphing over Kings and nations, they soon, as if in turn besieged by the action of the climate, and by, all the wants of, life, would find themselves at the discretion, of those whom they had insulted but a few days before. It is thus that providence seems to have wished to protect these poor people, by their very misery and their weakness, against the ambition and cupidity of polished nations.

Though the Natives do not pique themselves on courage and valour in fight, they however passionately desire the reputation of brave men; no greater wrong could be uttered to a man, than to call him a coward; as, on the other hand, no more flattering compliment could be paid him, than to say he has an intrepid and martial air. Beauty of countenance is regarded as a defect in

men; every one envies him whom the smallpox have worst used. Many, in order to give themselves a terrible air, and through a foolish ostentation of firmness and courage, make incisions on their visages on their shoulders and arms. It might be thought, on seeing them after this cruel operation, that they had just been engaged in a sanguinary battle.

They use nothing for staunching blood but gunpowder, and their wounds cicatrise in a short time. A Missionary one day asked a native, who was getting his visage furrowed, why he condemned himself to so much suffering? "For honour," said he, and because, on seeing me, people will say, there's a man of heart." Doubtless greater and truer courage would be shown, in exposing the person to the steel, of his foes, than in getting himself slashed with the edge of a knife: but it must nevertheless be allowed, that men who have constancy enough to submit, through, vainglory, to such painful operations, would not be incapable of generous actions of another description. Nor can it be doubted, that the form of the government which naturally invites the people to repose and sloth is also one of the causes which most contributes to sustain their cowardice. A slave, whose condition is independent of all revolutions, will never rush headlong into dangers, like a soldier whose interest is confounded with that of his sovereign, and who knows that in fighting for his country, he is also fighting for the little inheritance which he has received from his fathers.

CHAR. XIX - Of the Language

Among that prodigious mass of narratives, from which has been formed the general history of Voyages and Travels, and an infinity of others published every day, no mention is made of the languages which are, spoken in the different countries, the manners and usages of which are described to us; and if the authors did not from time to time put into the mouths of the inhabitants of those distant regions, some words of which they know the meaning, we should be tempted to believe, that only dumb people had travelled among those nations. All seem to have agreed on observing the profoundest silence on this matter, either because it appeared to them foreign to the province of history, and far from proper to stimulate the curiosity of the readers, or more probably, because they had not made a stay long enough among the people of whom they speak to us, to learn their languages and undertake to give us an idea of it. Be it as it may, all will agree at least, that whatever relates to the language, its genius, its relation with other known languages, even its mechanism and its flow are not traits which would look misplaced in the historical picture of a nation; and if we have to dread offending the delicacy of some of our readers, by referring them to the a, b, c, we dare hope that the greater number, and those especially who love the sciences, and cultivate the languages, will not be sorry to add to their acquirements, some succinct notions of a language which, considering it to be that of a barbarous people, is not on that account less interesting.

The idiom of Kakongo, nearly the same with that of Loango, N'Goyo-samba and other small circumjacent States, differs essentially from that of Congo. Several similar articles, and a great number of common roots, seem however to indicate that these languages had a common origins; but they know not which of the two is the mother tongue. The cleverest among the Natives have not the smallest idea of the origin and progress of their language; they speak, say they, as they have heard their fathers speak. It has been thought that there might be perceived some marked connections between this language and some ancient tongues, especially the Hebrew Greek, and Latin.

Though the Missionaries, in considering the richness and beauty of the language, Suspected that it was formerly written, nothing however has been found capable of convincing them; they have nowhere found any traces of writing, nor any vestiges of signs which might stand in its stead. The Natives consider it as a sort of prodigy, that the Europeans, by means of certain characters, communicate ideas, and converse at a hundred, or a thousand leagues distance, as if they were present; but they did not even suspect that it was possible to introduce this marvellous art into their language, and still less that it could be practised even with the most limited capacity. Writing, in fact the finest invention of the human mind, if its origin be not divine, has something in it which astonishes reason; and, had we not the use of it, we should doubtless feel the same sentiments as did these barbarians, at the recital made to them of its valuable advantages, which often equal arid, sometimes surpass even those of speech.

The Missionaries, deeming themselves the first writers of the language, used the right which belonged to them in that capacity, of determining the figure of the characters, and of regulating the orthography. They consulted the pronunciation in order to fix the number of letters which were to be employed in writing. They have taken them from our alphabet, only to the number of eighteen, which seemed to them sufficient; A, B, D, E, F; G, I, K, L, M, N, O, P, S, T, U, V, Z. The S, is put for the C, before the vowels a, e, i; the K stands for it before o, u, and all the consonants; it also stands for the Q on all occasions. The pronunciation of the language is soft and easy; it excludes the H aspirate, and hence that letter becomes as useless as it is with us in the words *horloge*, *hirondelle*, *heures*, and others, the first syllable of which in nowise participates the sound of the H, with, which they are spelt. The R is of no use to them, their organ admits not the roughness of its pronunciation; they change it into L, and if you tell them to pronounce ra, re, ri, they say la, le, li. They know not the sound, of the U, which they, pronounce ou. The X is useless in their alphabet. The J, consonant, is equally unnecessary; they never use our *syllables* *ja*, *je*, *jo*, *ju*; but they always pronounce it hard, ga, gue, gui, go, gou.

Almost all the syllables are simple, and form only one sound, this renders the pronunciation light and rapid; there are, however, many words in the

language, which begin with m, or n, as in the words *m-Fouka*, *N'Goyo*, but these letters are pronounced so slightly that they who are strangers to the language, would pronounce after them Fouka and Goyo. The letters a and o are, often repeated, and terminate a great number of words. Many liquid syllables also contribute to soften the, pronunciation.

The language has not, properly speaking, either genders, numbers, or cases. To express the difference or gender in animated things, they add the word *bakala*, male, or kento, female; thus, n-foufou-ba *kala* signifies a cock; n-foufuo-kento, a hen. We say likewise, a male, or female canary; a soft-roed or a hard-roed carp, &c. The cases, are distinguished, as *with us*, *by* articles, and it is the same with the nouns. The nominative of the verb has its case distinguished by the place it, occupies in the phrase.

The nouns adjective are not of more frequent use than in the Hebrew; the qualities of the person or thing are expressed by substantives, which gives to their discourse a strength and energy of which our language is not susceptible. They also, sometimes, render the adjectives by verbs; instead of saying he is a *despicable man*, they say, *he is a man to be despised*; 'tis a *monster to be dreaded*, instead of saying 'tis a *dreadful monster*.

The language admits neither of comparatives nor superlatives; verbs joined to substantives supply their places; thus, in order to say, *the king is mightier than the makaia*, they would say, the king surpasses the makaia in might: *the Zaira is the widest of all the rivers*; *the Zaira exceeds in width all the rivers*; or *all the rivers yield to the Zaira in width*. The superlative is also rendered by repetition of the positive. In order to say, *a very high mountain, a very black cloud*, they would say, *a high high mountain, a black black cloud*; *early in the morning, morning morning*; *mènè mènè*. It appears that this mode of expression is quite in nature; we see among us, that the little children who have not yet learned the use of the superlative, make up for it, in their little stories, by repeating the positive, and say, great great for *very great*; far far for *very far*, and so forth.

There are very few adverbs; there are, however, verbs which stand in their stead. The greater part of the conjunctions which serve to connect discourse are unknown to them; they have no terms which may be rendered by *for*, *then*, nor have they the conjunction *or*; they supply them by different turns of phrases. They also want the conjunction *and*; they supply it by another, which has the signification of our *with*, or otherwise they repeat it, and to say, for example, he *knows good and evil*, they say, *he knows good, he knows evil*; the army was powerful and trained to war; the army was powerful, it was trained to war; a mode of expression which, properly managed, has a fine effect in discourse.

The pronouns which mark possession are expressed by adverbs; thus, *my*, is rendered by *amé*; *thy*, by *akou*; *his*, *her*, *their*, by *andi*, and so forth; *my sheep*, *li mémé*, *li ame*; *thy scissars*, *tou ziolo tou akou*; *his mats*, *n'teva vi-andi*. This is as much as to say, the mutton to me, the scissars to thee, the mats to him. The nominative pronouns of the verb, *I*, *thou*, *he*, *we*, *ye*, *they*, are rendered by *i*, *ou*, *ka*, *tou*, *lou*, *ba*, when men or women are spoken of; and by the articles proper for nouns, when beasts or inanimate things are spoken of.

One of the great difficulties of the language consists in the articles; there are thirteen of them, seven for the singular and six for the plural. Those of the singular are *i*, *bou*, *li*, *kou*, *ou*, *lou*, and those for the plural *i*, *ba*, *bi*, *ma*, *tou*, *zi*. Each of these articles has under it a class of substantives to which only it can be joined. The article of *ka*, which signifies a bed, is *ki* for the singular and *bi* for the plural. A person would not be understood if, changing the articles, he said *li-ka* in the singular for *ki-ka*, or *zi-ka* in the plural for *bi-ka*.

Certain substantives are always preceded by their articles; others must have them immediately after them. *Lézè**, for example, which signifies a man servant, and *oula*, which signifies a toad, both have *ki* for their article; but *lézè* is always followed by that article, and *oula* has it always before; hence they say, *lézè-ki*, a man servant, *ki-oula*, a toad. He would be unintelligible, who, transposing the articles, should say *ki-lézè*, *oula-ki*.

* *Lézè*, which I have cited as one of the substantives always followed by their articles, takes its own before or after it, according to circumstances.

Several of these articles follow particular rules; the article *li*, for example, only precedes its substantive when it is nominative to the verb; in other circumstances it follows. The article *ma*, agrees only with the genitive plural, and always precedes its noun: it is of great use in the language; besides its peculiar function, it represents the names of *King, Prince, Governor, Chief of a village*, according as it precedes the name of a kingdom, principality, government, or village; thus, *ma-Loango* signifies King of Loango; *ma-Kaia*, Prince of Kaia; *ma-Singa*, Governor of Singa; *ma-Kibota*, Lord of Kibota. It is evident that this article corresponds in signification with our article *de* (of) in the genitive singular. When we say Monsieur d'Artois, M. d'Orleans, M. de Champigny, we mean the Count of Artois, the Duke of Orleans, the Marquis of Champigny. The plural which the Negroes use has something more majestic; and *des Artois* would present to the imagination a richer image than *d'Artois*; doubtless by reason, that all which has the air of aggrandizing a man and augmenting his domains, ever flatters his vanity most agreeably.

If there is nothing so difficult in the language as the articles, there is nothing finer and more satisfactory than the verbs. They may be reduced to three classes; common verbs, which vary only in their terminations, and these are the most numerous. The second is that of the verbs, which begin by *kan*, and lose that first syllable in many circumstances. The third comprehends those which begin with L and V, and which change at certain times the L into D, and the V into P. These three classes of verbs have common rules for varying their terminations; they have all the tenses which we have, and many which we have not; *i-mènè-lia* signifies, for example, I have eaten; *ia-lili*, I have eaten long ago; *ia-lia*, I have eaten a very great while ago.

Besides this multiplication of tenses, which does infinite service towards the precision of discourse, and which has supplied the want of adverbs, there is in this language a multiplicity of verbs which greatly simplify their expressions. Each simple verb has under it a many other verbs, of which it is the root, and which, besides the principal signification, have an accessory one, which we render only by periphrases; *sala*, for example, means to work; *salila*, to facilitate work; *salisa*, to work along with some one; *salisila*, to make a person work for some one's profit; *sazia*, to help some one to work; *salanga*, to be in the habit of working; *salasiana*, to work for each other; *salangana*, to be fit for work. There are no radical verbs which do not admit similar modifications; and by means of certain particles or augmentatives, each of these verbs and all its affiliations, designate also whether the action they express be rare or frequent; whether there be in this action difficulty, ease, excess, and so on for other differences. This multiplicity of verbs, joined to all the modifications of which they are susceptible, form an inexhaustible fountain of riches for the language, and display beauties which cannot be felt and appreciated but by use.

In the midst of this profusion of verbs, it is surprising that not one has been found which answered to that of *to live*; this is rendered by the periphrases, *to accompany one's soul*, *to be with one's heart*.

There are to be remarked in the language of the Negroes, many turns of phrases which appertain to the Hebrew. We have observed that they expressed, like the latter, by substantives, the qualities of the person or thing which are rendered by adjectives in other languages. Thus in order to say *hot water*, they say *water of fire*, *mazia-ma n'bazou*. They say also a *man of blood*, for a *cruel man*; a *man of riches*, for a *rich man*, and so forth. They never express the affections of love or hatred, joy or affliction, by present tenses, but by preterites, like the Hebrews: they say *I have loved*, *I have hated*, for *I love*, and *I hate*.

There are also found in the language many words pretty much resembling Hebrew words, and which have the same signification: in Hebrew, *bana* or *banak* בָּנָה, whence is derived the word *bén* בֶּן, son, signifies he has built, because they considered the children as living stones which composed the edifice of the family: in Kakongo, *mania* signifies stones, and *bana* children; *n'tamer* means a rule, a measure; and in Hebrew *támam* or *thámam* תָּמַם, fulness and perfection; *insé*, in the language of the negroes, the lower parts, the foundation; in Hebrew *isa*, which is written *ishab* יִשָּׁב, signifies lower parts; foundation. *Kóma*, to approach, to meet; in Hebrew *koum* קוּם, to rise up, and go and meet. *Lika*, to eat; in Hebrew *lakam*, which is written *lakham* לָכַם, signifies the same thing; and *likem* or *lekbem* לָכַם, means bread. The letter H, as we have remarked, does not enter into the pronunciation of these Africans. The little practice which the compositors have in Hebrew, does not permit us to augment, as we might easily do, the list of similar words.

The connections of this language with the Greek, appear equally marked. Besides several constructions of similar phrases, there are, as we have observed, several verbs which change their initials, and take augments and double letters as with the Greeks. There are to be found also a great number of words which differ little from Greek words, and signify the same thing: *Bafita*, which is pronounced *Bafitou*, means, like the *basileus*, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ of the Greeks, chief, man of dignity. *Bembo*, noise, sound of voice; in Greek *bembex* βεμβέξ, noise of wind. *Bima*, paste, *bialia*, victuals; in Greek βίος, life, and what belongs to life. *Doko*, to walk or follow; in Greek *disko*, δίσκω, I pursue. *Foulla*, to blow; in Greek *folis* φούλις, bellows. *Kama*, a mound, an obstacle; in Greek *kaman*, καμάξ, a stake, a prop. *Mazia*, the waters, the sources; in Greek *mazos* μαζος, the nurse's teat. *Baia*, poor, little; in Greek *baios*, βαιος, small, single, and without support. *Muna*, space of time; in Greek *mune*, μώνη, delay. *Munomai*, μυνομαι, to temporize. *Nota*, cloud, thick fog; in Greek *notis*, νοτίς, humidity. *Paka*, stable where animals are shut up; in Greek *pastoo*, παρίσω, I shut up. *Pakoua*, revenues, domains of the king; in Greek *pacus*, παχός, rich. *Dobo*, gift, present; in Greek *doi*, δώω, I give. *Pena*, pain, misery, inquietude; in Greek *pener*, πόνος, πένος, pain, travail, inquietude, &c.

There are also to be found several words which seem to have come from the Latin, such as *méfa*, table; *passi*, suffering; *mongo*, mountain; *méné*, morning; *béné*, much, largely, strongly. *N'zala*, zeal, haste; *zelus* is employed in the same sense by several Latin authors. *Ilia*, the intestines; the same word signifies the same thing in Latin.

We pretend not in this place to assign all the relations which this language may have with the ancient tongues: we have contented ourselves with citing some of those which struck us most, and without deciding of ourselves, we leave the informed reader, and him who is versed in antiquities, to decide whether we may not reasonably suspect some analogy between these languages; and, supposing that he judges so, to explain how it could have happened that the language of the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, should have concurred to form that of the Africans.

CHAP. XX.—Of the Religion and its Ministers.

THESE people, in order not to expose their religion to contempt, are very reserved in speaking of it to Europeans; and it is only by the long sojourn that the missionaries have

made among them that they have discovered, at least in part, what constitutes the object of their superstitions.

They acknowledge a Supreme Being, who, having no origin, is himself the origin of all things. They believe he has created all that is fine, all that is good in the universe; that being by nature just, he loves justice in others, and severely punishes fraud and perjury. They call him *Zambi*; they take his name in testimony of the truth; and they regard perjury as one of the greatest of crimes; they even pretend that a species of malady called *Zambi-a-n-pongou*, is the punishment of it; and they say, when they see one attacked with it, "there's a perjured man."

Besides this just and perfect God, they admit another, to whom they give quite different attributes; the first created all, the latter would destroy all; he delights in the disorder and evil which he causes among men; it is he who counsels them to injustice, perjury, thefts, poisonings, and all crimes; he is the author of accidents, losses, diseases, barrenness of land, in a word, of all the miseries which afflict humanity, and even of death itself; they call him *Zambi-a-n'bi*, God of wickedness. Here may be perceived the error of the Manichæans touching the Divinity. It appears natural enough that man who is not enlightened with the torch of revelation, considering the evils of all kinds which beset him from his entrance into the world to his departure, should study to discover the cause, and that, ignorance being one of the greatest disorders of his soul, he should be bewildered in his conjectures on matters so much above his faculties.

It is true, that the philosophers of antiquity have attained, by dint of reason alone, to a surmise of the truth, and have been able to say, that man doubtless was not born so unhappy except in punishment of some crime which was imputed to him, though he knew it not; the people of whom we speak did not carry their philosophy so far, and, little supposing that it was in man himself that we must seek the principle of the evils which afflict man, they believed, while they shut their eyes on the want of consequence to the supposition, that they could not dispense with acknowledging a maleficent divinity; but no sooner was a glimpse of the truth shewn them upon this point, than they seized it as if of their own accord; the history of the fall of the first man and the dogma of original sin, which shock and scandalize the proud reason of our modern philosophers, are to them a satisfactory unravelling, and, as it were, the first step which conducts them to the faith of a sole Supreme Being, sovereignly perfect, who is the author of all good, and who permits evil without participating in it. It appears to them much more reasonable to believe what is above the reach of reason, than what is at variance with it,—a mystery rather than a contradiction, the existence of original sin, rather than that of two rival deities.

They who know only the theology of the country, persuaded that the good God will always be sufficiently favourable, think only of appeasing the God of wickedness: some, to render him propitious to them, never eat fowls or game; others eat only certain sorts of fish, fruits, or vegetables; not one among them but makes profession of abstaining all his life-time from some sort of nourishment. The only way of making him offerings is to let die under their feet, in honour of him, some shrubs laden with their fruits; the banana tree is that which they consecrate to him in preference.

They have idols, which they honour less as gods than as interpreters of Divinity: they are wooden figures, rudely wrought, some of which are as large as life; they are shut up in temples which are neither larger nor more richly ornamented than common houses; some of these idols are found in their towns and villages; and sometimes, in woods and by-places, individuals go to consult them, to learn from them what will be the success of their undertakings. Some believe that they now and then speak, but all believe

believe that they inspire those who consult them. When a considerable robbery has been committed of which they know not the perpetrators, they go to seek an idol, which they bring to the public place with sound of drums and trumpets, in the belief that it will tell them who are guilty; if these do not appear, they bring a more celebrated idol, multiplying their songs and religious ceremonies; then they who have some knowledge of the theft, think themselves obliged to come and declare it; frequently the culprits themselves, intimidated by the pomp of the ceremonies, hint to the persons interested to let it cease, and the thing stolen shall be restored, which is done without delay.

Besides these idols of the first order, there are others which private persons keep by them, and which they honour through a vain confidence, without ever addressing any prayers to them. Several persons also carry in their girdles small marmosets, fish teeth, and birds' feathers, as preservatives against accidents with which they are or fancy themselves menaced for misdeeds. All of them, after having tilled their field, take care, in order to rid it of barrenness, to stick in the ground in a particular manner, branches of certain trees with some bits of broken pots. They perform nearly the same operation before their huts, when they have to absent themselves for a considerable time; and the most determined robber dares not cross the threshold, when he sees it defended by these mysterious signs.

The ministers of religion are called *Ganga*; they are as ignorant as the rest of the people, but greater rogues. The oldest among them submit to ordeals, and an infinity of ridiculous ceremonies are imposed on those who wish to become members of their body. No one doubts that the *Ganga* hold commerce with the God of wickedness, and that they know the fittest means of appeasing him. It appears that there is as much or even more confidence placed in them than in their idols; they are consulted respecting futurity and the discovery of the most secret things; the people ask of them, as they do of the king, rain and fair weather. It is believed that by virtue of their enchantments, they can render themselves invisible, and pass through closed doors, were they of the hardest wood or even of iron.

It has never been remarked that the *Ganga* offer any sort of sacrifices to the Divinity; and considering the functions of their ministry, they do not deserve any names but those of diviners, magicians, or tellers of good fortune. There are some among them, as we have observed, who practise medicine, and who make a trade of curing the sick by the sound of instruments, by breathings, and by incantations.

At the birth of children the *Ganga* are called in, who impose on them some superstitious practices to which they are to be faithful all their lives, and of which their mothers are obliged to remind them when they come to years of discretion. These practices are more or less austere and ridiculous in proportion as the *Ganga* is inspired at the moment; but whatever they be, those to whom they are prescribed never fail to adhere to them religiously.

The missionaries saw in the village of Loubou, in the kingdom of Loango, a boy and a girl to whom marriage was forbidden, and who were obliged on pain of death to observe a perfect continency all their lives. It is not known whether this law was common with others; whether it had been imposed from the time of their birth by the *Ganga*, or whether they had voluntarily prescribed it to themselves; in other respects nothing distinguished them from the common people; they held no ministry in the religion. There are some families who faithfully observe, without knowing why, the practice of circumcision.

The *Ganga*, who in other respects do not pique themselves on uniformity in their doctrine, unanimously teach every body that there would be an extreme danger in eating partridges,

partridges, and no one dare hazard the experiment. All the inhabitants of the country dread them, as fatal and ill-omen'd birds; they especially dread their cry. They who have zeal for the public good kill as many of them as they can; and as they know that the Europeans make no scruple in eating them, they carry them to the stores which they find on the coasts, where they obtain liberal supplies of powder and ball to kill more. When they are asked why they have such an aversion to eating game so delicate, and of which foreigners make a feast? they answer, that apparently what is good for one country is not good for another, and as for themselves they know well that no sooner should they have eaten of it than their fingers would have dropped from their hands.

Though the people who inhabit these climates have skins of the finest black, there does not however want an example of a child preserving the colour which all have when they are born, and its preserving it during life as white as that of an European. It is remarked, that this sort of whites have always sandy or red hair and beards, weak eye-sight, and hesitating looks. This error of nature, far from being a disgrace to those on whom it falls, conciliates the respect and veneration of the people for them; they are placed above the *ganga*, they are regarded as extraordinary men and quite divine; so much so, that the missionaries saw one whose hairs were sold as reliques, which, it was said, had the virtue of preserving the bearer from all kinds of accidents.

The missionaries, ever since their arrival in these countries, employed themselves in a particular manner, in finding out what was the opinion of the people on the nature of the soul, and its destiny; and they found, there was only one sentiment on this head; that all believed the soul to be spiritual, and that it survived the body; without however knowing what was its state after separation from the body, whether joy or pain; they only say, "that they believe it flies from the towns and villages, and flutters in the air above the woods and forests, in the way which the Deity pleases."

They who inhabit the farthest lands, and who have never had any connection with foreigners, think on this point with those who frequent the Europeans, and constantly answer the missionaries, who ask them what becomes of man after death: "that his body rots in the earth, but that his soul, being a spiritual substance, is incapable of dissolution, and subsists always."

This statement of the negroes on the immortality of the soul, joined to their uncertainty respecting its state after separation from the body, inspires them at once with great respect for the dead, and great fear of ghosts; since they never fail, in order to acquit themselves well toward their parents and friends, to celebrate their obsequies with all the pomp they can afford. As soon as the sick person has breathed his last, the ministers of medicine retire, as well as the players of instruments; his nearest relatives take possession of the body, which they exalt on a scaffold, under which they light a fire, which throws up a thick smoke. When the corpse is sufficiently smoked, they expose it for some days in the open air, placing beside it a person who has nothing to do but to drive away the flies that want to come nigh it. Then they wrap it in a prodigious quantity of foreign stuffs, or stuffs of the country. They judge of the riches of the heirs by the quality of their stuffs, and of their affection for the dead by the thickness of the roller. The mummy thus dressed is taken to a public place, and sometimes lodged in a sort of niche, where it remains a greater or less time according to the rank it occupied in the world when living. The shortest exposure is always for several months, and it often lasts a whole year. During all this time the parents, the nearest relatives, the friends, and above all, the spouses of the dead, who have placed their huts near the spot where it is exposed, assemble regularly every evening to weep, sing, and dance round the funeral lodge.

On the eve of the day fixed for interment, they enclose the body with all the stuffs that envelope it in a large coffin wrought by art, in the form of a tun. On the morrow, when all the relatives and friends are arrived, they put the coffin on a sort of funeral car, to which men are yoked; and they set forward. Care has been taken to level the roads by which the convoy had to pass. For the illustrious dead, such as kings and princes, they cut new ones across the plains, of the breadth of thirty or forty feet; along the road they make the greatest noise possible; they dance, sing, play on instruments, and all this is done with the greatest demonstrations of grief. Frequently the same person dances, sings, and weeps at the same time. When they reach the burial place, which is sometimes very far from the town or village, they lower the coffin into a hole about fifteen feet deep, cut like a well, which they instantly fill with earth. The rich often inter with the dead his favourite jewels, some pieces of coral or silver. There are some who raise the tomb, and place by it eatables, animals' teeth, or some antiquities by which the deceased set the greatest store, and which were formerly the instruments of his superstition.

Though these people are minute observers of the practices of the religion their fathers have taught them, the missionaries remarked, that they were not headstrong in them. They blindly follow prejudices which no one had hitherto undertaken to rid them of; but they have good sense enough to feel the vanity of their observances, the ridicule which attaches to their superstitions, and have too much good faith not to admit it, when occasion serves. All those to whom missionaries have spoken of religion, even the princes and grandees of the country have confessed to them, that they had little confidence in their idols and their ministers, "but," added they, "no one hitherto has spoken to us of the Deity otherwise than our fathers did: we know that European ministers have given sublime ideas of him to several of our neighbouring people, and that they have taught them how he must be honoured, but they have not come as far as us; slay yourselves; you shall make us know the truth, we will be docile in following it."